Celia Evans
from W. B.
Jany. 3rd 1872

LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT

TO

A FEMALE FRIEND.

A COMPLETE EDITION,

Translated from the Second German Edition,

BY

CATHARINE M. A. COUPER,

AUTHOR OF "VISITS TO BEECHWOOD FARM," "LUCY'S HALF-CROWN," &c.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE WRITER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME SECOND.

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* This name has been by mistake printed *B*arnhagen in the text.

PREFACE TO VOLUME SECOND.

THE Letters of William von Humboldt to a female friend may be divided into two parts. The second part embraces the last years of his life—the old age of the writer. These were all written between the years 1829 and 1835, and even the last, shortly before his death, was written with his own hand.

After Madame von Humboldt's death, the mind of her already-spiritualized husband assumed a completely different tone. It is true, his life and actions remained equally beneficent; his sympathy with all who were near him and deserving of it, consolatory and full of goodness and love: but the spirit of joy was fled, the aspect of the world was changed. He asked no more from life;—it could bestow nothing of value to him but quiet and solitude, that he might live undisturbed in his study, upon the remembrance of the past, in sorrowful recollections and lofty contemplations. Never was a wife more deeply, fondly, and tenderly lamented, and never perhaps was there one more worthy of such

enlightened sorrow. There is evidence of this in all the sonnets and letters written about this time. The reader in whose memory the author lives, will follow him with reverence in his suffering but honourable old age, as he has followed him with admiration in the years of his manly and energetic action.

Except this short preface, the Editress has little to add to this second part. With much difficulty she came to the determination of leaving these letters for publication after her death, and with still more reluctance she consented to their appearance during her life. But as the resolution has been taken, she cherishes the joyful hope that the book will find many friends.

Go forth, then, from thy long sacred concealment, thou dear consoling companion of gloomy hours, and bear thou to many the joy, the elevation, the comfort that thou hast borne to me!

The Editress asks from all who welcome her work, forbearance for the egotism which must necessarily appear, and good wishes for the short remainder of her life.*

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* This excellent lady died after a short illness.

LETTERS OF W. VON HUMBOLDT.

LETTER I.

BERLIN, 1829.

Your letter reached me at a time that I may consider the saddest in my life. My wife, whose very weak and painful state you know and have sympathized in, suffers rather less; but day after day gives me less encouragement to look for her ultimate recovery. At the same time a sudden and dangerous attack of nervous fever has prostrated the Privy-Councillor Rust, the proprietor of the house we occupy, our physician, and above all, a man with whom we have been for years on terms of the closest friendship. To-day, for the first time, a faint glimmering of hope of his recovery has cheered us. He would be a loss to hundreds, for he is not only one of the most active and fully occupied physicians here, but he has also been of the greatest service in the regulation of the hospitals and other medical institutions; and at the time he was taken ill, he was occupied with some important plans.

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In such moments, which are the most serious in our lives, it becomes a duty to examine ourselves and to seek support and reconciliation with our lot from the source of all strength.

LETTER II.

BERLIN, March 31, 1829.

I can write only a few lines to-day, my dear Charlotte. I have experienced the bitter grief which, when I wrote last, I saw before me. My wife died early on the 26th, and was interred yesterday at Tegel. She had been for four months on a sick-bed, and had suffered much, although she was spared very violent pain. Her pure tranquil spirit, reconciled to live or to die, remained unruffled; her last hours were peaceful, calm, and quite free from pain. She retained her consciousness to her last breath, and spoke a few moments before her departure with a clear, firm voice, to her two elder daughters and to myself. Her words were simple, as the tone in which she spoke was tranquil. The nearer the moment of death approached, the more peaceful and composed were her features;—not the slightest convulsion distorted her countenance. Her death was a gradual sinking into a deep sleep.

[WRITTEN AFTER AN INTERVAL.]

I have suffered a new, unexpected, and very bitter loss. A very intimate friend of ours, who for years has been accustomed to spend some hours with us every evening when we were in town, and to visit us frequently in the country, has just died after a very short illness. He stood with me at the grave of my wife, and yesterday I was at his funeral. His loss grieves me much, and I shall sadly miss his companionship.

LETTER III.

BERLIN, May 18, 1829.

Our letters, dear Charlotte, have crossed. Mine will have shown you that I anticipated your wish to receive tidings of me, and as you desire it, I tell you first that my health is very good. At such an advanced age as mine, one has always now and then a slight indisposition, and after a long winter a little rheumatism. From such weakness I naturally suffer sometimes;—but I pass over this. Unless my letters speak of illness you may be assured I am well. It is always irksome to me to speak of my circumstances, and especially of myself. A tender sympathy like yours, dear Charlotte, delights me when I am convinced that it springs from an upright and feeling heart; but it would be painful to me if I were compelled to believe that it was bestowed on me alone. It is a greater enjoyment to me to think that your sympathy is especially mine, from the sentiments which you have so long and truly entertained towards me, on the stability of which I can confidently reckon. I wrote to you lately of the death of a valued friend in whom I have suffered a great loss:—now spring flowers are blooming over his grave and over that of my wife. So Nature goes on in her eternal course, and regards not the mortality of man. The most painful and distressing events may happen, either in the direct course of her accustomed revolutions, or by some apparent deviation, but she still pursues her way with stern indifference and insensibility.

Whether we suffer from a present sorrow, or from the fear of one impending, this thought has something in it that makes us pause and shudder as it increases the bitter-

ness of our inward grief. But as we gaze further—as the soul loses itself in universal contemplation—as man returns to the reflection and devotion which are truly worthy of him,—then this eternal, unchangeable course of nature has a peaceful and consoling influence. It becomes to us a resting-place, "a stationary pole-star amidst the flight of meteors," as was beautifully said in a song of Schiller's. Man belongs to a great order of things not easily disturbed or thrown into confusion,—and as this leads to something higher, and at length to a point in which all doubts shall be resolved, all difficulties smoothed, and all the jarring tones of contradiction and dissension joined in one mighty harmony,—*he* must also in this order attain to this point. The character which nature bears is one so tender as not to wound the finest sensibility; the serenity, joy, and brightness which she displays—the glory and splendour in which she clothes herself—have nothing arrogant or repulsive. Who is there sunk so deep in sorrow or gloom as not to resign himself to the feelings which are awakened by the many-tinted blossoms of the budding spring, the joyful songs of the birds, and the glorious splendour of all these objects in the full rays of the summer sun? Sorrow takes the tinge of melancholy, with which a certain sweetness and serenity are not incompatible. At length we see that Nature is not all—not the whole of this world of spirit and of sense, but only as it were furnishing the Creator with materials and with power;—and man belongs not to her, save in the dust of his earthly tabernacle. He himself—his peculiar and exalted being—steps beyond her limits, and is associated with a higher order of things. You see from this how the long-delayed yet beautiful spring affects me, how I enjoy it, how it blends with my inmost feelings. It may also give you an image of myself. I can no longer experience any really joyful impression,—I can only feel sad and melancholy at this moment;—and when I say at this moment, it is because I am always unwilling to speak of

the future, because I am free from all affectation; and if a truly joyous mood were to return to me, I should give myself up to it without reflection and without concealment. But I really believe that my present disposition will remain with me.

I have never been quite able to understand how time should lessen the weight of a sorrow or a loss. The deprivation remains for ever the same, and the alleviation can only arise either from the remembrance of the loss being weaker, or by the feeling of being drawn closer to another who is left, which will I trust be far from me as from every noble soul. I feel it right that it should be thus with me. I have never sought for happiness in joyful emotions, or for unhappiness in painful ones. That which men commonly call happiness and unhappiness have never been so important to me as that I should complain if instead of the enjoyment of the former I was surprised by the latter. I have been happy for long years by the side of my wife, in great measure through her means, — at least the thought of her has mingled with every real enjoyment. This happiness the course of nature and the ordinance of Providence have taken from me, and without the possibility of a return. But the remembrance of the dead, and of the life we have spent together, can never be torn from me. There is happily something that man can retain when he will, and over which fate has no power. In retirement and solitude I can live over again in this remembrance, and shall never complain of unhappiness. For we may have a severe sorrow and not feel unhappy, if this sorrow be so deeply entwined with our inmost being that it cannot be separated from it, and gradually it is cherished there until it has fulfilled its purpose. The memory of the past has an endless power, and if painful longings arise to give ourselves up to it, it has yet an inexpressible charm. We can shut ourselves up in thought with those we have loved and lost—we can turn away in peace and freedom from all that is external; and

though still active and benevolent, for ourselves we ask nothing, for all that the heart has power to enjoy is within. If we lose that which has been the noblest and most intellectual part of ourselves, a new epoch of our life is opened. That which we have lived till now is closed; we can look at it as a whole, retain and live over again its feelings in our memory; but we have no more wishes for the future, and as through this remembrance we enjoy to a certain extent a constant spiritual communion, and feel ourselves elevated by its strengthening influence, life, which is the medium of all these feelings, retains its charm. No attraction of nature is less pleasing to me; but I avoid mankind because solitude is become necessary to me. H.

LETTER IV.

TEGEL, June 12, 1829.

I thank you very much, my dear friend, for your last letter, which I read with my usual pleasure. I thank you especially for what you say in reference to my feelings. I know that my sorrow is yours, and also that you fear to awaken it. This tender fear has something holy in it, and is a characteristic of all deeply-feeling hearts.

You see from my letters that I am tranquil and composed. I live (and the feeling will gain strength from year to year) in the remembrance of the past, with an enjoyment that the present can no longer give. In this remembrance I am rich, and in so far happy, as I feel that this enjoyment is of the nature suited to my advanced age. Beyond this remembrance I seek nothing. I do not in this life expect consolation, satisfaction, and compensation. I ask and require nothing on this side the grave. Towards my children I am the same: my feelings with respect to them have not changed, as my sympathy is awakened by their grief for our common loss. I cannot be more watchful over them, or be bound more closely to them, than I have ever been. In relation to all else, I remain the same. I am certainly not less sympathizing, benevolent, and ready with advice and assistance, than formerly. So, dear Charlotte, you must put yourself in my place, and you will see that you have no reason to be anxious about me. Those who travel together on the path of life must separate at some point;—happy if the separation occur at a time when the survivor must soon follow. But the loss even for years is short when compared with eternity.

I can perceive that my mind is gradually and almost unconsciously becoming more reconciled to the event in life—

or in fate, as you would call it—which has unfortunately occurred earlier than the usual course of circumstances would have led me to expect. Such a feeling of reconciliation should in my opinion be acquired by every man, and the effort for its attainment must be entirely his own. There is no rule of wisdom—no work done by others, that can save him the earnest struggle. This frame of mind is frequently attained only after much suffering, both physical and moral; but in this consists that true resignation to the appointments of Providence which I consider the first and highest duty of man. Dwelling upon the present period of my life, there is no longer any clinging to individuals or to the world; but a kindly forgetfulness of self, a disposition to sympathize and to *give* pleasure in every possible way, are more predominant feelings, inasmuch as there is less inclination to *receive* pleasure,—at least that is not the great object.

My residence here suits me particularly well, now even more than formerly. Yet I have been almost every week for two days in the town, the last place where I can enjoy perfect freedom and solitude. It is singular that even at this time I have been engaged in business without the possibility of refusing. It is fortunately of no great importance; but it will take some time, and obliges me to be away from this place, and brings me more into collision with the world than I like. A new museum has been built at Berlin, in which are to be collected all the works of art in the possession of the king. There is a committee of artists appointed for the purpose, and the superintendence has been entrusted to me. The work itself is light and interesting, and the men with whom I shall come most in contact are in the circle of my acquaintance. On this account, this new situation disturbs me less than it might have done under other circumstances.

You mention in your letter the inundation and the unfortunate sufferers in consequence of it. The assistance

which has been afforded to them has been very important, and the Government has also done much. The present distress is easily relieved, and then what always happens in such cases takes place. A number remain who, neither poor before nor impoverished now, can hardly be considered proper objects of relief, and are yet thrown back in their business, and suffer considerable loss. These are almost the most deserving of compassion,—yet nothing can be done: such mental and bodily distress may be alleviated, but can never be quite removed. Even these must afford assistance to the completely destitute, and this necessity is the hardest upon those who would have given help willingly had it been in their power.

In inundations and earthquakes, such as now occur in the southern provinces of Spain, it is a strange consideration that certain appointed districts and men seem unalterably ordained for the return of the calamity, the occurrence of which drives every one from the locality. We are apt to blame the settling again on these spots as thoughtless and imprudent;—but this is certainly unjust. There is on one side the feeling that in every spot of earth we are equally in the hands of a higher Power; and perfect security we can have in no place. Experience also confirms the feeling. In those parts of Spain which have lately suffered so fearfully, there have been till now, as far as we can ascertain, no earthquakes, and no traces have been found in the formation of the mountains or the state of the soil which could lead to the expectation of such a catastrophe. We must live nowhere if we wish to avoid all danger. Events of this sort are signs from Heaven that man should not cling too closely to earth. They are only in another form the repetition of the admonition of Paul, which you quote so justly and beautifully in your letter—"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." Again:—This return to the districts desolated by floods and earthquakes—this recolonizing the spots that have been

the graves of men and of the labours of men, arises from a praiseworthy and pious trust in the goodness of Providence that he will control the wrath of the elements, and will not suffer the safety and repose of men to be continually threatened and overthrown. We may certainly remark that the changes in the surface of the earth are less frequent than formerly—that nature wears a more kindly aspect to man, and does not appear in all the terrors of her wild uncontrolled power. Even experience, history, tradition, and the interpretations of the traces of past events and revolutions in inanimate nature, as signs of what has occurred, sanction and confirm this confidence. If all means are adopted by which man can protect himself against the powers of nature, then this settling again in a dangerous district is justified from all objection.

I am very glad that you continue to find pleasure in the study of the stars. The heavens and the impression their contemplation makes upon the mind are so different from the feelings and ideas of earth, that he who finds pleasure only in the displays of Nature on the surface of the globe, loses half, and that the most important half, of her manifestations. I say not that the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator are displayed more wonderfully in the firmament than on the surface of the earth; they shine equally in the most diminutive and the most magnificent creations. But the heavens awaken in the mind purer, more exalted, deeper, more disinterested, and less sensual feelings. I myself can contemplate the heavenly bodies but little, as my sight is too weak in these bright summer-nights to recognise any but the largest stars.*

* The natural occurrences which gave rise to these remarks being long past, and having been succeeded by others of more importance, may have little interest now. But the observations are characteristic of a great and noble mind, and display with so much simplicity the gentleness and benevolence of his spiritual nature, that all who know him will recognise them as emanating from him.

As you wish me to appoint a day, I ask you to send me your next letter on the 23d of this month. Farewell.—I remain, with unalterable sympathy and friendship, yours,

H.

LETTER V.

TEGEL, June 6, 1829.

Since I wrote last to you, dear Charlotte, my life has not been without anxiety. My little grandson, the child of my eldest son, who has been here with his mother for some months, was so dangerously ill for many days that we despaired of his recovery. He is six years of age—a fair lively boy, who for this very reason—for according to the opinion of enlightened physicians there is peculiar danger in fair children—and probably also from a remarkable conformation of head, has unfortunately a tendency to inflammation of the brain, or at least there is danger that it may result in this. Till now this weakness has fortunately remained undeveloped, but this time it was exhibited in its most alarming form. The means applied have, thank God! warded off the danger and brought a speedy and complete recovery; but for three or four days we were all very anxious. The loss of this child would have been very sad. I do not say this only because he has no brothers or sisters, being my son's only child, but more from the peculiarly amiable disposition and intelligent spirit of the boy. I know from sad experience that the loss of a child, even when others remain, is a grievous trial;—the lost one always appears to have been the only one. But perhaps the kind, if not the degree of sorrow, may be modified in some natures.

I have experienced a trial of a different kind in the loss of the late Madame Huber. You have perhaps seen the notice of her death in the papers, and I feel sure of your sympathy, as you have frequently alluded to her with interest in your letters. It is certainly mentioned in the

general papers, but I did not know whether the intelligence, not being of universal interest, was noticed in the local papers. I have known *her*, with the difference of a few weeks, as long as I have known *you*. Returning from Göttingen, I twice saw her and Forster (who was then her husband) at Mayence, and stayed at their house. We were constant in the interchange of letters, sometimes but seldom, at other times more frequently;—for two years our correspondence was never interrupted. After nearly forty years I met her, when I went for the first time with my lamented wife to Gastein in Bayreuth, where a daughter of hers was married. She was the same as in former days, with the exception of the inevitable alterations of time. She wrote me a touching letter after the death of my wife: I little thought it was the last I should receive from her. Hers was a peaceful death. She loved life; and though at some periods of it she had struggled courageously with much misery and real want, she had upon the whole enjoyed it—at least she never complained. But she also evinced a joyful resignation when death became inevitable, as is proved by the account which her son-in-law sent me of her last moments. She was ill only a few days, from a cold, against the effects of which, although she was older than I am, she took few precautions. About twenty-four hours before her death, feeling that her end was approaching, which was evident also to the physicians, she spoke with perfect serenity and composure, and with the clearness of spirit for which she was remarkable, to those around her, respecting her own future, and theirs upon earth, till gradually her strength failed, and she sank away in a gentle slumber. For strength of mind she was certainly one of the most remarkable women of her time. Her knowledge was extensive; she had read much in almost all the modern languages, and had attained a high degree of intellectual cultivation. But all this was surpassed, regulated, and made available by an innate strength of mind that no education

or cultivation can give, and by the fulness of a rich creative fancy. In her home, with her children when they were little, she had the most exquisite womanly simplicity, and, without appearing to consider it any merit, a remarkable purity of sentiment. Till her death she laboured with great activity and ceaseless energy, for she supported herself by her own efforts. H.

LETTER VI.

I was very glad to find that you had heard by indirect means of the Huber family, and were so much interested in them. I do not remember that the late Madame Huber mentioned the family of St —— to me, or the name would have occurred in her letters. But it was not her way to *relate* much in her letters, or to give an exact account of her life and actions. I am glad, however, that you are so much interested in her without having known her, as it is a proof that she was appreciated and loved by the St ——s. And this was not easy: she had such peculiarities, that it was difficult to understand her. There are extraordinary spirits that cannot be measured by everyday rules. I should be tedious if I were to enter into particulars. The grave now covers all; and what relates to the departed one is better in one's own breast. I am very glad that one of the Miss St —— (and particularly the one of whom you have told me so much that is amiable and pleasing, and who adds so much to your happiness) should have been on such terms of intimacy as to be addressed by her under her Christian name of Theresa; and also that both her parents were well acquainted with the Huber family when they lived in Stuttgard. I knew both Forster and Huber. For all practical affairs I should have preferred Huber. Each was inferior to his wife in depth and compass of mind and elevation of character. But Forster was more amiable; he had more imagination and warmth of feeling, and a greater brilliancy of expression in speaking and writing. At the time I knew him when I was very young, I had a very high opinion of him, and I afterwards found that as a scholar and an author he enjoyed a good reputa-

tion, fully justified by his genius and acquirements. But he dwelt too much upon himself to be susceptible of deep emotions, and this self-contemplation gave a colouring to all else. But this was no hindrance to his being capable of great and noble sacrifices. He gratified his own self-esteem in the sacrifice, and looked for applause from those in whom gratitude would forbid any other opinion; and thus, according to the Scripture expression, "He had his reward." He died at Paris, not later, I think, than 1795; for I was in Paris in 1797, and he had then been dead two years. It was a happy thing for him that he did not live longer: his would have been an unhappy lot. His amiable disposition was of the nature that can be indulged in youth only, and is checked by the advance of old age. It was to be regretted that he married too early, or even that he married at all. The obligation of supporting a family involved him in the painful necessity of writing too much for profit, by which his private studies, and finally his health, suffered. He left no son. The son-in-law of the late Madame Huber, at whose house I last saw her, is a son of Herder's; he is now settled at Augsburg, where his mother-in-law died.

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That unfortunate as well as fortunate events never come singly, has become a proverb; and there must be some truth in it, or an appearance of such, to have made it an illustration of the general experience. It is difficult, however, to maintain it against particular inquiry, for certainly both sad and pleasant events often occur alone. The principal reason for the common opinion is this, that after any very striking occurrence the attention will be especially called to those of a similar nature. If this association of similar events were really founded in the nature of things, a secret connexion between a man's inward disopsition and his outward destiny must exist—a melancholy temperament produce a melancholy lot, and the reverse. To a certain extent, considered in a worldly point of view, if it be not possible

to form in all its single threads a connexion between his inner and outer being, I fully believe that the one is intimately blended with the other; but I still doubt if grief has any secret power by which it draws to itself as by a moral magnet, the materials for fresh grief. Besides, the thing falls of itself, for it will be confirmed by experience that a joyful event frequently follows a sad one. Even in well-disposed minds, there may be a real sorrow that feeds upon itself; and if we maintain that time or other events will lessen it, these are words which have value only in a weak mind which fails to retain in its due strength the experience it has once acquired. It is the same with the most joyful occurrences. In this wondrous human mind, too, sorrow may exist at the same time with an emotion of a quite different nature. Grief for the loss of children in the early period of a happy marriage is a lively and frequently recurring example. It must be so. Man must appear stationary, and destiny changeable: But destiny has its own stability, though unseen or unrecognised by us.

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I shall go to Gastein in a few days, and return here in the latter part of September. I am not at all ill: I am even so well, that I do not think a journey to the baths necessary. But my physician considers it desirable, and insists upon it, as I have been accustomed to it. The use of the baths is so strengthening, that it must do good. I am unwilling to leave this place, but I shall rejoice to visit the beautiful mountain district of Gastein, which I have loved ever since I knew it. I must ask you, dear Charlotte, to address your next letter, on the 4th of August, to the Baths at Gastein near Salzburg, not to pay the postage, and to write on the outside of the cover, that if I should not have arrived, it may wait there for me. I must further ask you to write again to the same address, and also unpaid, on the 25th of August, and not to let the letter be a day later, as the course of post is very long.

The physician, of whose dangerous illness I wrote to you in the winter, has happily recovered. The Privy-Councillor Rust is well known abroad, and you have probably heard of him: he was and still is our friend and physician. He is going this year to Gastein, but will visit another spa first, and then join me for a few days. After that he will pursue his journey further, and I shall return here as soon as I can.

Farewell,—and receive the heartfelt assurance of my earnest sympathy and friendship.—Yours, H.

LETTER VII.

Baths of Gastein, Aug. 20, 1829.

I feel convinced that with your accustomed kindness and friendship, and your usual punctuality, you wrote on the day that I fixed;—but I have received no letter. The course of post is very tedious. As far as Salzburg the letters probably come without much delay, but from there the post comes here only twice a-week. If, therefore, a letter unfortunately arrives just after the post has left, there it lies unpitied! I am sorry to think that in this way you may have been a long time without a letter from me. My last was written, as far as I remember, on the 29th of July, and ought to have reached you the last day of this month; but this will hardly come into your hands before the end of August.

I have been since Sunday the 16th amongst these well-known mountains, and I occupy the same rooms as in former years. This is very pleasant, and an agreeable surprise, which occurred by chance;—for this really was the work of chance. I had with my dear wife fixed upon other rooms, which had the advantage of enjoying the morning sun, and which were the best in the little *castle* (that would elsewhere bear the name of *dwelling-house*), and usually occupied by the Archduke John, who has now built a house for himself. To these I expected to go, and I was sorry to think that I should be deprived of the associations which the old rooms would inevitably awaken. But on my arrival I found that through forgetfulness or some mistake they had given one of the rooms to some one else, and had allotted our old ones to me. They made many apologies, which were unnecessary, as the change was very agreeable to me.

The weather has been very favourable, as we have had no continued rain except for one day. The snow is still lying on some mountains, not far distant, but very high. But it shines in the bright rays of the sun,—and it is pleasant to see at a glance the varieties of season. The sun, where it does shine, is very scorching, as it is reflected from the rocks. But here we never need be afraid of heat. The whole neighbourhood is shady, and a number of waterfalls give a refreshing coolness to the air; indeed when you are cold it is difficult to find a warm sunny spot. When you have mounted a certain but very moderate height, you arrive at a level, open, sunny valley, surrounded by high mountains. This is my usual walk at noon: in very pleasant weather I am accustomed to take a shorter walk before breakfast to the Gloriette. I have written to you so often from Gastein that I think I must have described the situation of this place, so I will not weary you with a repetition. There is a sudden, theatrical, and picturesque prospect from it, but it requires the bright rays of the sun upon the snow-white foam of the waterfall;—in gloomy weather it has no charm.

I have travelled in eight days a distance of 110 miles. Such a journey is like reading a historical work: in this we pass through a course of time—in that through a course of places. In respect to man, who is always the most important object in all worldly considerations, and chiefly lays claim to observation, it happens in both cases that the individual is lost in the mass, the single existence appears to have no worth in opposition to the appointed destination of the greater or lesser whole to which it belongs. On the the contrary, the observer, the reader, or the traveller, feels his individuality. He cannot deny that this must be the centre of all his exertions;—I do not mean in order to purchase external good, enjoyment, and happiness, but rather to provide for the health of his spiritual nature, with which all happiness is so intimately connected. I make use

* German = equal to 4 English

intentionally of this expression, in order to close no channel by which man may strive after his spiritual improvement. For he may raise himself to a high degree of spirituality through richer and purer developments of his ideas, and more vigorous cultivation of his character, or by the shorter path of quiet unobtrusive piety. If we consider the world in a worldly point of view, the individual is either quite thrown into the shade, or borne along by the great stream. This impression arises from the consideration of the connexion of circumstances and the changes of this ever-renewed life on earth. What is the individual in the stream of circumstances? He does not disappear like an atom in an immeasurable, all-absorbing power, but in a higher, nobler spirit. For this stream does not rush on headlong, led by blind chance, but pursues its destined end, guided in its course by an almighty and all-wise hand. But the individual does not live to see the attainment of this end: he enjoys a greater or less share of success, according to the measure of it ordained by chance, by which I merely understand uninvestigated providence; he will often be sacrificed in the attainment, and must frequently leave his work suddenly and in the midst of his labours. He is only an instrument, and does not appear to be even a powerful one, as, when the course of nature sweeps him away, his place is supplied; for it would be absurd to suppose that the great objects of the Creator could be delayed a moment by any circumstance in the life of a weak individual. In the events of the moral world there is an aim; an idea is worked out;—at least each must think so in reference to himself. In the order of material Nature it is otherwise. We can only say that powers arise and run their course as long as they are permitted. As long as one looks at a single individual, he appears different from other men—different in ability, health, length of life, &c. But if we look at a mass of living beings, they appear all alike. In every century the human race is renewed about three times; in a cer-

tain number of years an equal number die. In short, it is evident that it is only in the masses, in the whole race, and not in the individual, that we perceive the results of established laws. We may say, and deeply feel, that an all-wise and all-good Power guides each exclusively; and nothing is so repugnant to the feeling of the individual, if they are painfully affected, as the consideration that he is merely one of a mass contemplated in respect to natural life. On this account it was that we were so shocked to hear, shortly after the French Revolution, the cool calculation that the number of those who were sacrificed at the courts of justice composed a very small part of the population of France. In this view man shares the fate of all other life for the most part subordinate to him. The race passes away, and is renewed like the race of animals and plants that surround him. These reflections, which I have applied to the world at large, concern also the individual being; and as one cannot deny their truth, they would sink the spirit into desolate and helpless grief, if the inward conviction did not arise with its consoling influence, that God constantly appoints the course of nature and of circumstances; so that, including his existence in an eternal future, the happiness of the individual does not perish, but on the contrary grows and increases. True peace, true consolation, or rather the feeling that no consolation is required, first arises when we leave all earthly considerations, and contemplate the appearances of Nature and the world as if from an exalted point of view. The Creator might have placed man in life only for His own pleasure: He might have given him up either to the blind changes of universal laws and progressive organization, or to an ideal aim of an ever-present, long-continuing whole, whose limits and true nature he is never in a position to survey. Every one on his entrance into life ought to be happy,—happy in a deep and spiritual mind, whose happiness is an inward feeling arising from love and the ful-

filment of duty. In this disposition God guides and loves him, and considers him worthy of his protection. In him—in the individual—lies the aim and the whole power of life, and with this aim, the course of nature and events will be brought into harmony. Nowhere is the paternal care of God for the happiness of each so beautifully, so soothingly displayed as in Christianity, in the New Testament. It contains the simplest, but at the same time the most exciting and heart-stirring demonstrations of it.

I must ask you, dear Charlotte, to write again to the same address. It cannot be helped if a letter from you arrives at Tegel during my absence.

Farewell.—I remain, with unchangeable friendship and sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER VIII.

Regensburg, Sept. 10, 1829.

You see, dear Charlotte, by the date of this letter, that I am on my way home from Gastein, and that I have come a considerable part of the road. But I travel very slowly, and make very short daily journeys, for I think that those who have been under regimen at the baths should take care of themselves, and not rashly undo the benefit they may have acquired. They can strengthen themselves much better after having been at the baths, which will then continue to do good. I believe that I shall experience their good effects for the rest of the year.

I am most deeply grieved, my dear Charlotte, to find from your letter that you are suffering from a sudden weakness in your eyes, and that it is accompanied with pain. But I might almost call this a consolation. As far as I know, pain generally accompanies temporary weakness of sight, and not that which leads to total blindness. You are right in saying that a continued or frequently returning weakness of sight would be more melancholy, and more to be pitied in you, than in many others. But I trust that yours will be merely temporary. As far as I know, you have never suffered from your eyes before. Serious diseases of the eye generally come on very gradually, or if they come suddenly, usually after some severe illness—measles, nervous fever, or the like, which has not been your case. Your remark, that your complaint may have arisen from the peculiar state of the weather during this year, appears to me just, and it is to be hoped that it will pass away. My eyesight is sometimes better and sometimes worse, like yours. I suffer scarcely any pain, and it may get stronger.

But I have no great idea of what is called strengthening the sight. Mine is no better if I spend a week at Gastein without reading or writing much, especially by a strong light; and no worse if I work much in the light. In time it may be different, but at present it is as I say. In my right eye a cataract is forming. That eye gives me little assistance in reading or writing, and if the other were the same I should be able to recognise objects only when quite close to me. This complaint is of many years standing, but it has advanced more rapidly during the last few years. I use my left eye only, and that also is gradually becoming weaker. I cannot read or write for any length of time without spectacles, and those which formerly appeared very powerful are now of little service. If I should live, which I neither desire nor believe probable, for eight or ten years, I can scarcely flatter myself that my eyes will accompany me to the grave. It is possible that I might submit to an operation on them, or at least upon one; but I have often occupied myself with the thought that I shall become blind and remain so, for the operation is not always successful. I now believe that I am so prepared for the event that it would not be beyond my powers of endurance. I should bear it, I hope, with that resignation with which man should always bear human trials. I should retain as much of my activity as possible, and if a man can be active there is little fear for his happiness. But the mere idea of a misfortune is very different from the misfortune itself, when it comes with the fearful certainty of its presence;—and I consider blindness the severest misfortune that could befal me. It is very possible that all present determination and preparation may be shaken and quite desert me, if the day shall ever come which brings me no more light. We should trust to nothing so little, and labour in the acquirement of nothing so much, as the fortitude and self-control which are the only foundations of happiness on earth. Heaven appears to compensate the blind by infusing into their souls

a gentle resignation and quiet patience. This I see in a person in Berlin, whom I visit from time to time on that account. I refer to a lady some years older than myself, who has been for six or eight years incurably blind of both eyes, but without pain, and without any disfigurement. She was formerly rich, and her husband held a respectable position; but she has lost almost all her property, and now has some difficulty in maintaining a bare existence. She has never taken any exercise, or even left her room, since she became blind. Three or four people visit her, but that very rarely. A maid-servant who is her only attendant, is also her reader, and she derives great pleasure from the occupation. In this situation, and this way of life, this lady assures those who see her, that however much an object of pity she may appear, she is really peaceful, calm, and happy, and that this period of her life is preferable to the earlier ones. This real and unaffected contentment with a lot usually considered so sad, seems to me very remarkable.*

I was much shocked by an occurrence in Regensburg, which took place in the inn where I was staying. I was told when I came that a Miss von Hügel was dangerously ill in the house, and in the morning when I got up at eight o'clock she was dead. She had died about six o'clock. She was the daughter of Baron Hügel, who was the imperial ambassador at Reichstage, and died some years since. She was about thirty years of age. I knew her in Vienna: she was beautiful, very amiable, and had a very sweet voice,

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* These remarks on approaching blindness may appear to many readers unnecessary and superfluous, for a high celestial spirit and a purer light has long since streamed into those weak eyes for which I was so painfully alarmed. To those who had the happiness to be near to him, and to find a pattern in all he was, did, and thought, it will appear otherwise, and for such only are these extracts from his heartfelt, spiritual letters intended.

and considerable musical talent. She had been at Carlsbad with her mother, her younger sister, and her brother, a captain of horse in the Austrian service, and died here on her return. Such a death must be very bitter.

I am not surprised that you were glad to read my brother's "Views," and that they gave you, as you say, high enjoyment. They aim at interesting all, and have not failed in their object.

I had begun this letter at Regensburg, and finished it here at Tegel, on the 19th September. I could not find time on the road. I considered too, that if I finished it in the course of my journey, the post would be longer, and that it would be better for you to receive it when your eyes were stronger. I not only wish this may be so with my whole heart, but I have also confidence that it will be so. I ask you to write to me as soon as you can; I fix no day, because the sooner the more welcome, and because, even if you have got rid of the pain in your eyes, which I hope may be the case, you must still be very careful, and ought not to bind yourself to a certain day.—With unchangeable and sincere friendship, yours, H.

LETTER IX.

TEGEL, Sept. 30, 1829.

I received, a few days since, dear Charlotte, your letter of the 25th, and thank you for it. I am very glad to find that your eyes are so much better, and that you have found simple means to answer. I have a great opinion of such sensible and carefully-applied remedies. Your next letter will, I hope, bring me the intelligence that you are quite recovered. Pray do not be anxious on my account: I am not. It were foolish and unmanly to lose one's repose and balance of mind about what must occur in the nature of things. As long as I retain my faculties, this will never be my case. I know that corporeal organs must get weaker by use, and are liable to accidents, and I shall not expect that Providence should arrest the natural course of events for me. If I entertained this presumption, it would be a melancholy sign that I had lost the powers of mind which every reasonable man ought to possess. The weakness of my eyes is of long standing, and arose from an accident which befel me in my youth. Do not pity me, dear Charlotte. Even if my eyes were worse, I should not have lost what is necessary to a man's peace and contentment. By God's wise arrangement, man depends upon himself and not upon his outward circumstances. But my sight is not so weak just now. It is only difficult for me to read writing, and that I have not often to do. I feel no inconvenience in reading print, but I avoid very small or confused type. Writing does not hurt me at all. As I know what I am writing, and it is a very frequent occupation, it does not require much exercise of sight.

You remark very justly, that in many cases an incipient

cataract remains at a certain point without leading to positive blindness. This is very fortunate. In trials of this sort we must accustom ourselves to look steadily at both the greater and lesser evils connected with them. Blindness entails a two-fold suffering: we are unable to do many things for which eyesight is indispensable,—and we are deprived of light, we are surrounded by darkness. This last I consider by far the worst evil; for the mere sensation of light, quite abstracted from the perception of objects, is always pleasing and delightful, and seems to have something in common with the purer spiritual life. Light is of all created things the least corporeal. It is connected, without our being able to say how, with life itself, and life, light, and air are, as it were, related—always thought of together—the first of created existences. It is wonderful how completely darkness loses its attraction when it becomes a constant companion, for it must be admitted to *be* attractive as a sweet and welcome relief after the glare of day. But the pleasing emotion depends upon the consciousness that daylight has preceded it, and upon the security that daylight will again return. It is the alternation only that is agreeable. Eternal daylight, too, would weary. This is felt in the summer of the northern regions, where twilight is the only night;—at least I never found this pleasant. But eternal darkness must have something much more melancholy in it: we should be exhausted by its wearisome sameness. It is tranquillity, but it is also a repulsive blank. From the want of external impressions, one is thrown back upon one's self, and yet with much less power of thought and action. A great trial to me would be the discontinuance of communication by letters except on mere matters of business; for who could bear to dictate a confidential letter, or to hear one read by another? The essence of epistolary correspondence is its immediate communication, and I should give it up if I were really to become blind, which I trust will not be the case. It is remarkable, that

judging by my present feelings, such an occurrence would drive me more from the companionship of others instead of leading me to seek it. I cannot quite explain this to myself, as conversation would seem to be the natural resource to charm away the time. It is perhaps that, without exactly knowing why, I am myself unwilling to be with the blind. As I am conscious that this is wrong, I struggle against the feeling when it arises, but the effort I make does not remove my repugnance. The sight of weak, or fixed and staring eyes, and even of a bandage over them, affects my whole frame. I can resist the emotion, but I cannot prevent its recurrence. A shade before the eyes, especially in a woman, is unpleasant to me. Habit has not removed this feeling: I have been with the blind every week for a year, but the impression remains the same. I still feel that if I were blind I should not seek the companionship of others. I know not whether this feeling is general, but I cannot divest myself of it.

I perceive that I have been very egotistical, and must request your forgiveness, dear Charlotte. On this point I wished to satisfy you, for I have this month been constantly occupied with the thought of blindness, as accidentally three or four intimate acquaintances have been in great danger of losing their sight, which they have had previously no reason to apprehend. It is no passing weakness from which they suffer, as fortunately is the case with you, but real incurable disease, which may advance more or less rapidly. Besides, I am desirous of looking firmly in the face every accident that can befal a man, for what can man do better on earth than learn to be a man?

Now I must stop, and repeat what I said before: Do not distress yourself about me. It is to be hoped there is nothing very serious.

You asked me lately about that little work of my brother's, entitled "The Genius of Rhodes." You wish to know whether it is entirely a fiction, or is founded on his-

tory. I forgot to answer this. It is entirely a fiction, and has nothing historical in it. It serves as a medium for some philosophical ideas, the development of which is the object of the work. In the times to which it refers, such half-poetical clothing of earnest philosophical truths was more popular than at present. I am glad you have been pleased with it. It is, as you say, a particularly interesting and pleasantly written book.

If it is possible, I should like you to send your next letter on the 13th. I have been prevented finishing this till to-day, the 4th. Farewell. I wish sincerely that your eyes may be better.—With unalterable sentiments of friendship, yours, H.

It is a very wise rule in life, not to wish to be too strong and free from the inconveniences of old age and of bodily weakness. It is much better to bear with patience what is merely troublesome, and does not interfere with one's usefulness, and better still to be proof against unpleasant emotions. But when an evil increases very much and becomes dangerous, it is natural to make an exception to this rule.

We have beautiful October weather here, and it is apparently the same with you. Bright sunshine always imparts to the soul a much more joyful tone than dark and dismal weather. Such is my case. Nevertheless I have the happy peculiarity,—for happy it certainly is,—that though sunshine is the most agreeable, dark or bad weather of any kind is not positively unpleasant to me, for its very diversity has a charm. It is so with many things: I am fully alive to their advantages, without feeling to the same extent the disadvantages of the reverse. I certainly prefer being well; but illness, which I have often had severely, does not put me in bad humour, and my first inclination, when something unpleasant occurs that is not associated

with real affliction (and illness never is so), is to smile or laugh at myself. This is no stoicism, no greatness of soul, nor do I wish to make a merit of it. But it has always been agreeable to me, not so much to dwell upon pleasurable emotions and to avoid painful ones, as to rejoice at the opportunity of knowing myself in different aspects, and gaining a control over my own character. An example will perhaps make clear what I mean. When I go to a play (which, however, is seldom the case now), it is not so much that I see the representation of this or that character, of a miser or a lover, &c.; but what interests me is the manner in which the author brings his hero on the stage, how he lets him prosper in an intrigue, sustains his peculiarities, and carries him through all the scenes without losing sight of his individuality. It is the same in life. Life may be looked on as a drama. But the colouring of the poet, taking the inward truth of things, gives a higher tone to the affairs of life, and excites emotions of sorrow or of pleasure more worthy of nature than those we experience in actual life. I have gone through most of the vicissitudes in the life of man. They act upon me according to their nature, and the pleasure I feel in contemplating their purely distinct character counterbalances their immediate effect upon me. To some degree this is the case with all men. It is more or less so only as the mental constitution differs amongst men; but otherwise all are alike. My tendencies are decidedly towards happiness, and I am very glad of it. I have evidently more pleasurable than painful emotions, and more happiness on that account. Whilst I seek the pleasurable less impatiently, and avoid the painful less loathingly, each comes to me unasked. It is a very certain thing in life that happiness generally comes uncalled, the less it is sought for its own sake. This is frequently insisted upon in the Scriptures, in noble and exalted images.

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My wife's grave-stone is now ready. It is a granite

pillar, which stands upon a high pedestal. On the pedestal is the name of the deceased. On the pillar will be placed a statue of *Hope,* which my wife ordered some years since at Rome, but which has only just arrived. The height of the whole will be about twenty-eight feet. At the back of the pillar there is a seat, and at the front an iron railing. The space will hold seven or eight graves,—they will be made in the earth without any vault. Before the grave is a field and an uninterrupted view of the house; behind and at the right is a thickly-wooded park. To the left again a field and a view of the sea. This very day the body will be laid in the new grave. The same clergyman and the same attendants will be here, but of the latter two will be absent;—the one is dead, the other dying.

Will you send your next letter on the 17th? This time I might well expostulate. A visit is not a very sufficient excuse. But your letter came at the right time. Farewell, yours, H.

LETTER X.

TEGEL, Dec. 24, 1829.

I have never written to you from here so late in the year, my dear Charlotte. For many years I have been in town at this season, but in former happier times of my life I used to spend the winter in the country. What I did in the days of my happy companionship, I return to now that I am alone. This is the course of human life.

It is very cold here to-day, and as you are at such a short distance it is probably the same with you. Still I have been out. I walk out every day at sunset. I am sorry to miss the very moment, and the half hour before and after are to me the best of the day in summer and winter. The moon then waits to show her gentle beams, when the superior splendour of the sun does not outshine her. To-day the sun went down so wrapt in clouds, that instead of his disk I could see only a dull yellow fog. If I always liked contemplative repose, and often resigned myself to it when I was amidst crowds of men and the throng of business, my present solitude depresses me still more. I have no inclination for any particular employment. My scientific occupations are the most congenial to me; and I feel every day more and more, that pure and thoughtful self-contemplation calms the spirit and gives that peace which is certainly the work of God, but which, according to his declared will, must not be looked for by man as an outward gift, but must be worked out by himself by an effort of his will. I have always dwelt much upon the time when we shall all meet again, and now the more, since I have been bereaved of what afforded me every moment the purest joy, and been thrown back upon the cold sternness of life. I believe I shall spend my appointed

years as I have done the last few months. Only some very remarkable event could bring a change; nothing would be perceptible from less important occurrences. I look upon my life now as completed,—a thing of the past. But I do not feel that this induces in me deeper contemplation of death and the future, but rather more reflections in connexion with the present life. I believe that this is not a peculiarity, but only a more powerful tendency in me than in others. When one is recommended to think on death, it is only as a warning against the levity that deems life a lasting gift. It should therefore be a spontaneous act of self-recollection. Besides, I know not whether the constant dwelling upon death, and what follows it, be healthful to the soul. I can scarcely decide, as it is more a thing of feeling than founded upon reason,—but I believe not. The confidence arising from the trust in an all-good and all-just Being, that death is only the release from an imperfect and unfinished state, and a passage to a better and a higher, should be so present to a man that nothing can for a moment shake it. It is the foundation of inward peace and of the highest exertions, and an inexhaustible source of consolation in affliction. But the description of the possible condition, the imaginary painting of the future world, draws us away from life, and sets something apparently better in its place, as certainly the objects are more exalted after which one aims, but yet being quite intangible, the contemplation can serve no good purpose. God has also plainly shown that such a contemplation is not in accordance with his will, for he has cast an impenetrable veil over the future, and has left each in ignorance of when his own time of departure will be:—a certain sign that the living should belong to life, and should adapt themselves to it. It appears to me, therefore, that the knowledge of our being in the last period of life is a warning to make the final effort to complete the life of the soul, to make it a whole. To be in the position to do this, that we may not be torn away in the midst of the active

employments of life, but have some space for leisure and repose, is a gift of providence that must not lie unimproved. I do not mean that we should *do* something, *complete* something: what I am thinking of, can be done by every one, in every situation;—I mean, to work within, to bring every feeling into perfect harmony, to make ourselves independent of outward influences, and so to form ourselves as we are in our brightest and most peaceful moments. The powers of each individual vary, and some demand a longer delay than perhaps the term of life will permit. But this I call the real aim of life; this gives some value to life, and if ever a misfortune, which may befal those who appear the happiest, should cause me no longer to consider this the aim of life, I should condemn myself and strive to overcome the feeling. But a man cannot dwell in vain upon such an object in life. It must be the direction given to the soul, and, as the opportunity presents itself, the judging, approving, correcting principle: life is, at the same time, an outward occupation, a real actual labour, in all stations and positions. It is not exactly this occupation, this labour itself, that possesses great value, but it is as it were a thread with which to connect the thoughts and feelings, or by the side of which they run. It is the ballast, without which the vessel would have no firm hold of the waves of life. This is the view I take, upon the whole, of my scientific employments. They are preferable because they are associated with ideas. I have been so prolix in order to give you an idea of what I call my solitude and my joy. It is not an original sentiment, but arising from my circumstances. The survivor of two is alone, and it is then a natural and allowable feeling to desire to remain alone. Then loneliness favours that self-meditation, that working at one's self, that completing and closing up of life of which I have spoken. At length come the studies, to which their place must be given. On this account I go very seldom to my children in the town, but I rejoice when they come here. First, people pity my

absence of mind—that is politeness: then they find that this retirement is natural at my age and in my situation—this is the truth. Weariness of life, blindness to its joys, and a wish that it may end, have no place in my solitude.

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I have written to you, dear Charlotte, two letters which you had not received when you sent yours. I am anxious to receive an answer to them. I shall be very glad if you can write to me again this year. For that on which we are going to enter, accept my heartfelt wishes. May Heaven restore to you peace, joy, and happiness, and above all health and strength! If I can in any way contribute to your happiness, it will afford me sincere pleasure. Now fare you well. Think of me with friendly regard, and trust with perfect confidence in my upright and unchangeable sympathy in all that concerns you. Yours, H.

LETTER XI.

TEGEL, Jan. 26, 1830.

You must have received two letters from me, dear Charlotte, which are still unanswered,—one of the 9th, the other of the 21st of January. Your last was not written at my request, but from your own impulse, and you would receive mine of the 9th, too late to answer it at the time I mentioned. But I know that my letters give you pleasure, and as I have some leisure, I will write without waiting for your answer. Perhaps I may receive it before I close this letter, as there is an opportunity to-day from town.

I wish very much to know how you are, and whether you have regained the peace and serenity I desire for you. I should rejoice yet more if my counsel has in any manner contributed to such a result. It must, however, really be your own work. It is a very true saying that a man's happiness lies in himself: the joyful events which Heaven bestows are only enjoyed when they are received by him in a right spirit, and the bitter and painful ones he has it in his own power to mitigate.

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For what admits of no alleviation—and there certainly are such misfortunes—God has created melancholy as a sort of medium between happiness and misery, joy and sorrow. It reduces sorrow to a feeling that we cannot give up, to which we cling, to which we resign ourselves with the consciousness that its effects are not destructive but purifying, elevating, and improving in every way. It is a great thing when a man acquires the disposition to struggle against all that befals him, merely because it is human, because it results from his earthly fate, to receive it as the destiny of

man, and to endeavour to develope his own nature more fully. The sooner a man acquires this temper the better. He can then say, for the first time, that he has really experienced life. Man is placed upon the earth to live, and he can take away with him only what he has attained in his own soul. It is a very happy thing when he sets all his thoughts and feelings on one object. He is then safe for ever,—he desires nothing more of fate—nothing more from men,—he cannot experience anything in respect to them but joy at their happiness. He fears nothing from the future. He cannot change what is unalterable; but the dwelling on one thought, one feeling, even if it be upon the most dreadful trial which can befal a man, would become only the dwelling on one remembrance which remains for ever. He who has attained this calm clinging to one remembrance is possessed of all, because he wants and desires nothing else. Still more peaceful and blessed is naturally such a feeling, when this one thought is not of earth but of Heaven. But in a real, all-absorbing dwelling upon one feeling, even on an earthly one, there is something not all earthly, for the soul cannot completely attach itself to what is wholly of this world. The criterion of the genuineness of the feeling is its freedom from all restlessness, and all kind of longing—wishing for nothing, asking for nothing, knowing no desire except to remain as it is. Therefore is the sentiment for the dead so sweet, so pure, so free from ardent desire, that it merges into the infinite without being destroyed: in its growth the soul acquires strength to resign itself to a gentle melancholy. Whenever the sentiments for the divine exist, they are indisputably the purest, the most refined from all earthly mixture. They have the peculiarity that they do not estrange us from the world, and yet they take the sting and the poison from all the real and threatened ills of life. As the thought of the lost one remains with those to whom it clung in life, so are they, instead of being led away from life, rather connected more

closely with it: there are circumstances in every situation, in which one thinks of the dead as still sympathizing with us and feeling an interest in our progress through life. These connect the sorrow also with our present existence. It is a connexion which takes away the harshness of life, for we consider ourselves as only partially belonging to it. If our thoughts are all beyond this world—if few are devoted to our present existence, what we are accustomed to fear in life may lose its terrors for one so armed against earthly fate. Time and eternity are united in the feeling of a rest that nothing can disturb. I always, even before I had the experience, thought that it must be so. I never thought it possible that there could be an imaginary compensation for a real loss; and now that the lot has really fallen upon me, I feel it to be true. Yes, I perceive with great joy that the true and proper influence which such a loss must have, is more fully and powerfully developed with time,—as the night grows deeper, the longer it lasts. The enjoyment which one experiences at the darkness of night—and of which I have always been very susceptible—is very like this feeling. One is alone, and wishes to be alone: he expects nothing from without, and a double life reigns within:—day has been, and day will return.

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It is a fearful winter, and there is at present no prospect of milder weather. When we think of the distress it will occasion, it is pitiable. But I have never passed through one so easily. The peace and independence of the solitude in which I live are the causes of this. I walk out every day; but except this daily exercise, I never leave the three rooms adjoining each other which I occupy. I cannot describe to you the effect of the sight of the unsullied snow-flakes and the constant brilliancy which streams upon them and the frozen lake from the sun whose rising and setting I see from my windows, from the moon in the evening, and from Venus and the other heavenly bodies.

Will you let me hear from you on the 2d, or at any rate during the first week in February? Farewell, and be assured of my constant sympathy.—Ever yours, H.

LETTER XII.

Tegel, March 5, 1830.

I have been very uneasy about you, dear Charlotte. I asked you to write on the 25th, and I knew that if you were well you would do so, and yet I had no letter from you this morning. It appeared hardly possible that a letter should have taken a week to come,—and yet I received my letters from Berlin early this morning. I thought you must be ill, or at least that you had been so, and I could not drive this thought out of my head. At last in the evening, when a second messenger arrived, I received your letter. I cannot tell you how I rejoiced to see your handwriting. The letter bore the postmark of the 25th. I cannot explain the delay. Perhaps I mentioned a day when the post did not leave, so that it might lie waiting. But I beg that if ever you should be prevented writing by illness, you will send two words to say what is the matter with you. It is very painful to think of a friend being ill, without knowing of what nature the illness may be.

My health has been very good for some time. I have enjoyed the late fine weather very much, and have taken longer walks. There has been a sweet gentle breeze and the sunshine had a wonderfully enlivening effect. Once since I wrote to you, I have had a slight threatening of inflammation in my eyes;—I suppose I took cold when I was out. I was quite well again by staying a day in the house, and refraining from reading and writing. I have been surprised that my sight has not suffered from the glare of the snow, which is considered very injurious to weak eyes, but mine appear to be proof against that irritation. But I always feel a kind of pain when I watch the setting

of the sun;—as his disk touches the edge of the horizon I stand still and never avert my gaze till the last beam has disappeared. I write first about my health, because you say you always look first for that part of my letter. I wished you to find it at once, or I should have begun with the more important contents of your letter to which I now turn.

* * * * * *

17th.

I received on the 6th your letter of the 1st, so that it also has been a long time on the road. But it may have lain two days in my house in Berlin. I wish the post were better regulated. Will you always now send your letters on a Tuesday, as you were accustomed to do? Your longer silence did not make me anxious this time. I was certain that you were not ill, as I had so particularly begged that you would send me word if that were the case. But I conjectured the cause of your not writing, and I find from your letter that I was correct. It was too natural a feeling not to have arisen in your mind. Your present letter has given me great pleasure, particularly on account of the peaceful spirit that pervades it, which I entreat you to maintain, as it must assuredly be the most salutary for yourself. The real enjoyment of the blessings that remain in life can only arise from the cultivation of this spirit. Peace is the natural tone of a well-regulated mind at one with itself. External circumstances may threaten and may for a time unhinge the most placid disposition; but a truly great soul does not yield to circumstances, and there are even women who unite this power of resistance with the greatest activity of mind and vigour of imagination. This we may admire, though we must not expect often to find it in them. But in a man it is an imperative duty, and he loses all just title to consideration who shows a deficiency in it.

I am very well. I am free even from little ailments, and I can perceive no change in the state of my eyes: but I do not deceive myself with this. It is natural that a weakness once felt, or an incipient dimness, should remain. But the progress may be so unmarked that it may continue through the remainder of life without producing any great suffering. This will probably be my case. You are right in saying that difficulty in using the pen generally accompanies advanced life. This want of power appears either as a trembling, or a state which I should rather call helplessness than weakness. In order that the handwriting should be firm and distinct, a number of very small and scarcely perceptible movements of the finger are required, which must be made rapidly and yet perfectly distinct from each other; and in old age the necessary pliability of the muscles is wanting. It is the same with all occupations which require equal strength in holding and supporting the hand. I do not think the use of the baths would remedy this. I have improved since I was at Gastein, for I am stronger now than I was last spring and autumn. Old age seems to advance gradually with years, but after an illness, or a great misfortune which nothing can alleviate, its progress is much more rapid. This has been my case. If I had not experienced the loss I have suffered, old age might have been delayed many years. But it was natural that my bodily powers should also suffer from the great change this loss has brought to me. This change I feel more and more every day from the sudden separation after thirty-eight years of companionship, and the absence of that constant interchange of thought and feeling we so long enjoyed. This it is easy to bear while the health is as little affected as mine is. I can affirm—I know not if you agree with me—that old age is dear to me. It is a natural condition of humanity, to which God has appointed its own feelings and its own pleasures. If with a magic wand I could conjure for myself the possession of youthful strength and freshness for the

remainder of life, I certainly should not do so. Youthful strength and freshness would not suit the feelings of old age; and these feelings, acquired through the course of a long life, I would not resign for anything in the world. What you say of my frame of mind I subscribe to so far as it is a gift from Heaven demanding the most heartfelt gratitude, and is no merit of mine. I am indebted for it in great measure to what has now ceased to be the immediate source of it. For if one is long beside a pure and truly great character, he is gradually imbued with a similar spirit. I should prove myself to have been unworthy of the possession if I could do otherwise than live in inward peace on the remembrance, and, when the opportunity occurs, employ myself usefully and benevolently.

It has been a very great satisfaction to me that my last two letters were of so much service to you. I have only this view in all that I write to you, and I beseech you so to judge every expression. We differ widely in our views of the inner life. It signifies little that all do not think alike: each must work out his own happiness in his own way. But when one fully agrees with the opinions of another, and gives himself up in confidence to them, they may exercise a guiding influence. I wish that my letters may have an invigorating effect upon you. My earnest request to you, dear Charlotte, is, that you maintain the composure of your mind, and keep it open to the cheerfulness that may be found in every situation. We cannot always feel cheerful, but we may always keep ourselves open to cheerful impressions when they arise.

Will you write to me not later than the 27th. If sooner, all the more welcome. Farewell, and rest assured of my uninterrupted and friendly sympathy. H.

LETTER XIII.

TEGEL, May 6–9, 1830.

Accept my sincere thanks, dear Charlotte, for your letter of the 27th of April, which I received at the proper time. I am very well, and have myself experienced no bad effects either from the wet spring or the severe winter, though many have suffered from ague in consequence. I have somewhat changed my mode of life for the summer. I now rise regularly at six o'clock, and go to bed at the latest at midnight. The morning hours have the greatest charm for me,—so I am writing to you early, my dear friend: it is my first occupation to-day. Neither late nor early rising has any effect upon my sleep. . . . The night has in it something inexpressibly sweet. The calm ideas and images, when one can enjoy such as those I used frequently to experience, assume a softer, more beautiful, even a spiritual tone, and their enjoyment is all within, as in the deep stillness there is nothing, not even light, to disturb them. Sorrowful or painful recollections and impressions are rendered milder, and are imbued with the repose which makes every affliction lighter and less distressing. We may yield to grief more calmly, and a thoughtful mind does not seek to drive away sorrow, at least not to destroy it, but to bring it into harmony with the whole being, that it may remain the companion of life. I can now rejoice at the long winter nights, and have, as I say, often felt this in former winters. If, on the other hand, we think how joyful and beautiful light is, we feel with grateful astonishment what a treasure of enjoyment nature has laid up in the daily change. The only thing required is to have a disposition to enjoy it, and this is in every man's power. Everything which surrounds

us contains, independently of its own destination and material use, food for reflection, and enjoyment for the mind and the soul: the more we give ourselves up to such contemplations, the more this deeper signification is displayed, which belongs partly to the objects which suggest it, and partly to ourselves who discover it. Man need only look at the clouds. In themselves they are merely shapeless mist and vapour arising from damp and heat, but seen from the earth, how they animate the sky with their form and colour, and how many fancies and feelings they call forth in the soul!

I shall set out, my dear Charlotte, on the 2d of June, and on the 2d of August, or a few days later, I shall return here. I go first into Silesia, and thence to Gastein. You will perhaps wonder at this, as I am so well. But it is wiser to go to the baths whilst one is well, than to wait to be ill. I preserve my health by my very regular manner of living, —by my residence in the country,—even by the frame of mind which I cultivate, in which no external desire agitates me, and the only inward one has never caused me any desolate feeling. I was formerly more excited by active life, and sometimes more unsettled;—whatever made life more joyous was also an occasion of anxiety. But my physician recommends the change, as Gastein has always had a beneficial effect upon me; and as my only objection to the journey is my absence from this place, I follow the advice, without, however, implicitly believing in its importance. I shall again have the old rooms at Gastein which I formerly occupied with my wife, so that I shall be surrounded by the same associations as those in which I live here.

I hope that you will pass the summer in the peace and tranquillity which your mind is formed to enjoy, and also that you will give yourself up to the contemplation of the most blissful and exalted sentiments that can occupy the mind. Your last letter, and even the one before, appeared to me to show that you were beginning to attain this tone

of mind. Do what you can, dear Charlotte, to regain your former tranquillity. I will gladly do what I can to contribute to this end. I am convinced that you have perfect confidence in my assurance that it grieves me to know you have been so long in a depressed state, and I wish you could speak more freely of your troubles.*

What you say of George Jacobi's Travels has interested me very much. I remember hearing of the book. Farewell.—With sincere and unchangeable sympathy, yours,

H.

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* What at this time depressed me so much, was of such a nature, that with the utmost trust in my good and honoured friend, I could not confide it to him. In part, my sufferings arose from the wounding of tender chords of feeling by another; and, in part, my state of mind was unintelligible even to myself. It was a painful web of real, not imaginary suffering, which could only be borne in silence, but which robbed the spirit of all elasticity, and the mind of all tranquillity.

LETTER XIV.

TEGEL, May 29, 1830.

I received your letter of the 16th a few days since, my dear Charlotte, and, as you foresaw, it has given me double pleasure, because it is written in so calm and cheerful a tone. I wish nothing more than that you may remain in the same frame of mind,—and this you may certainly do if you do not indulge yourself in gloomy and mistaken views of life, but strive after that peace which will render you independent of all external circumstances. Without this inward struggle after an attainable peace, a man always remains the sport of circumstances, and loses or regains his balance of mind as these are favourable or adverse. The entire discontinuance of walking is the deprivation of a great enjoyment, if we have become accustomed to it: I have experienced this myself. The want of exercise, however, I have never suffered from, though many do so: but one never enjoys Nature so much as in a long walk with no other object; for the very essence of a walk is the not being tied down to any particular purpose. Soul and body must be in perfect freedom; one must scarcely have a motive to turn to this or the other side. The exercise promotes ideas, and one may think of something important, or be lost in dreams and fancies, which make greater progress with the motion of walking, and one feels himself more light-hearted and cheerful. Only a short time since it occurred to me that I obtained during a walk the comprehension of an idea which had been long in a crude state. I had often in vain worked at it, and suddenly, whilst I was out, it came clearly to me, and on my return home I committed it to writing immediately. But I never go out in the morning. I am perhaps

wrong, but I have been so little accustomed to it, that I cannot do it. But I enjoy the sight of the green fields and trees from my windows, where the light of the morning sun on the foliage gives such a beautiful and remarkable effect of light and shade.

I have been reading lately Goethe's second Travels into Italy, or rather—for it is no description of a journey—his letters from that country. You speak at the same time of Jacobi's. I have never read the Travels, but I have heard the book praised, and know the traveller well. He studied with me at Göttingen, and was, if I mistake not, a companion of your brother's. He was an amiable man, and very industrious, and yet I avoided his companionship, as for my inclination he was in too many students' clubs. What you tell me from his Travels respecting the pomp of the churches, is very true and very striking: how imposing it would be for a truly pious feminine spirit like yours to find constantly in the open churches a refuge and "asylum," as you say, for its deepest wants. I have been reminded of something by your remarks. You have perhaps heard of Fernow, who has written much on art and literature, and also a valuable Italian Grammar. He was many years in Rome, and married there a woman who was of low station and had served as a housekeeper. After he had been married some time he returned to Germany with his wife and lived in Weimar. The residence there did not suit her, and she died soon—it might be from home-sickness. It was remarkable what she was continually repeating, "How poor and how dark!" The last expression one may easily understand as referring to the sunlight, but the "poor" was remarkable, as in Rome she must always have been surrounded by poverty. It must have referred to the churches, which are bright, large, and magnificent, and in every way rich. These she considered as belonging to her life, her daily association. The churches in the Italian towns, and in all Catholic countries, are open all day from the early morning

till late at night, and any one can go in and remain as long as he chooses. Every one looks upon them as his own property, and this woman must have done so. However poor she might appear in her home, the power and glory of the church were hers. There is also, as you remark, and as it appears to me also, in another respect a praiseworthy custom, that gives to each an opportunity, in any moment when he feels the inclination, to be able to go to a place where he may find stillness and solitude, or ceremonies that are suited to his frame of mind—a place which infuses a feeling of reverence as soon as he steps into it, and exercises a soothing influence. Our evangelical churches are too much considered as places appointed for preaching, and too little thought of as intended for the religious elevation of the mind by prayer and meditation.

Goethe's Letters from Italy really tell nothing of Italy or Rome. They are not at all descriptive. One must be well acquainted with the places from having seen them or read other travels, in order to understand his remarks. But they paint Goethe himself, beautifully and interestingly, and show what Rome and Italy are through the impression they made on himself. At all events, they form part of a very remarkable delineation, for we know what incredible longings Goethe had for years to see Italy and Rome.

I set off early to-morrow, and go to Breslau. Farewell. Trust always to my unchangeable sympathy. Very truly yours, H.

LETTER XV.

Ottmachau, June 22, 1830.

I received your letter of the 6th and 7th some days since, my dearest friend, and I thank you much for it. I am sorry that mine of the 29th of May was later in reaching you than it should have been. I set off from Berlin on the 3d, and finished my letter on the day of my departure. My journey has been very pleasant. I have had no reason to complain of any inconvenience. The weather has been beautiful and without rain, which I dislike when I am travelling. I came by Breslau, and arrived here at seven in the evening, where I found my eldest son and his wife. I travel alone, without any of my children. I had no illness to occasion the use of the baths, and I prefer being alone on a journey. It would be the same if I were older or more delicate. Whatever assistance a man requires when he is old or ill, it is much pleasanter to receive from servants. Children, relations, friends, command too much respect for this: it is delightful to see them and to talk to them, but to trouble them with our bodily weaknesses is, at least in my opinion, not making a proper use of the blessing they are intended to be to us in life.

I shall leave Ottmachau to-morrow, and spend a couple of days with a friend of many years' standing, who lives in the country in the province of Glatz. I shall then pursue my journey, so that I may reach Gastein by easy stages on the 1st of next month. I go by Prague, but not by Vienna. Though many people go to the country in summer, yet some always remain in town whom I could not avoid seeing, and my time will not allow me to stay. Besides, Vienna has never been a favourite town of mine, and it would give

me no great pleasure to see it again. I was twice there: the first time, many years since, soon after I was married, and later, with my wife and children on my way to Paris. A long period of time, as you know, elapsed between the two visits. Town and society have always left the same impression upon me. Lintz, on the contrary, which lies on my road, is a pretty, pleasantly situated town, and I shall be glad to visit it again. In coming to a town, one must not think first and chiefly of the situation, but consider how one should like to remain there; for we ought to calculate upon spending life alone. A man can be of importance to others only when he is himself happy, and nothing tends to this so much as the contemplation of nature; so I hope, if I remain well, to reach Gastein easily though not expeditiously. It seems strange enough to undertake a distant and precarious journey in perfect health, to gain an uncertain good for the next year. You will ask me, dear friend, why I do it, if I do not see the propriety of it? My principal reason is, that if I should be ill in the winter, which may be the case with any one, I may avoid the complaints of my physician and others that I would not obey them, but out of my own head neglected to continue the use of the baths, which has agreed with me so often. I have a great dislike to all conversation about my health, all seeking for reasons, regrets, and disquiets. It is useless and foolish not to submit quietly to what is inevitable; and as this appears inevitable, it is my principle, without having perfect faith in his infallibility, to follow the physician whom I employ, and to allow myself no deviation from his directions. Then he is answerable for the consequences, and I have nothing further to do. On this account, and not from my own confidence in its efficacy, I use the bath at Gastein. For myself, I have greater confidence, as a means for the preservation of my health, in a simple, uniform, rational mode of life, which keeps a man generally at home.

You speak in your letter of thunder-storms. We have

had many here, but, thank God, without any injury. I have never from my childhood had any fear of thunder. The sight of some very timid person who was once in our family, I believe, cured me, or rather protected me from it. Nevertheless I cannot sympathize in your wish to be struck and killed by thunder, or rather by lightning. There is certainly something imposing in the idea of being as it were touched by Heaven ifself. But the lower regions of clouds, from which the thunder proceeds, belong rather to earth, and are even less mysterious than earth itself. The fire which is nourished by nothing on earth is certainly the purest element, and when the stroke kills immediately, the death may be a happy one, as it appears to be without pain. But last year a case occurred here in which a man struck by lightning did not die till next day. He was an old invalid; he fell down insensible, but consciousness returned, and he appeared well and uninjured. The following day, however, delirium ensued, and carried him off in a few hours. Such cases, however, may be rare. But I should not desire so sudden a death. We know so little of death, that I would commit it all to Heaven. I should avoid even the appearance of causing the sudden event by a wish. Man comes into the world without memory or knowledge:—to be enabled to leave it in a state of complete consciousness, is worthy at least of an effort. It appears to me as if we knew not the whole of life, if the hour of death be not included in it. I seek to dwell only on the present moment, and to keep myself free from all thoughts on the past and the future. But no one can say how he shall feel at such a moment. In what can be experienced only once, no one can answer for himself. The timid may become courageous, and the courageous timid. No preparation can avail, for no one knows what he has to prepare for. *Death* is but a word to us. One's own experience alone can teach us the real meaning of the word. The sight of the dying does little. What one sees of them is merely what precedes

death: dull unconsciousness is all we see. Whether this be so,—how and when the spirit wakes to life again,—this is what all wish to know, and what never can be known until it is experienced.

That is a very beautiful part of your letter in which you say that you consider life as a casket in which a man can lay up all the treasures he possesses. It is a remarkably happy expression. Man can make of life what he will, and give as much value to it for himself and others as he has strength given him. This is to be understood only in a spiritual sense, as man has not external circumstances in his own power: but over his spiritual and moral nature he has perfect control. Life, even in critical situations, when we cannot attain more than a certain degree of peace of mind, has in the truest acceptation of the term an inestimable and incalculable value. It is my firm conviction that a man has himself to blame when he finds it devoid of interest and happiness.

I am exceedingly glad to see by the whole tenor of your letter that you are gradually regaining your former peaceful and cheerful tone of mind, which I have so much wished to see reëstablished. I feel that another can do little or nothing towards it, but no struggle to keep the mind open to any joyful impression is ineffectual. I consider this more likely to do good than the endeavour to drive away unpleasant ideas, which, besides being more difficult, is less successful.

I was interrupted at Ottmachau, and could only finish this letter here at Prague to-day, the 26th. It is too late for to-day's post, but I shall take it early to-morrow to the nearest post-office. Farewell.—With deep sympathy and friendship, yours, H.

LETTER XVI.

GASTEIN, July 17, 1830.

Thank you, dear Charlotte, for your delightful punctuality. True to my determination, I arrived here on the 1st of July, and received your kind letter as I expected. You see that, according to your wish, I begin with the old appellation of your Christian name. I too prefer it, and had no object in changing, except that I fancied you preferred the appellation of "dear friend." Yet I had no sufficient reason for this; it was only a supposition. But there was really little change, as both convey the same impression to me. But I thank you for the remark, and still more for the request. I will never again call you by any other name. Between husband and wife I always liked the use of the Christian name, and used it myself. I did not wish myself to be so addressed, because I dislike the name of William, and it is only for the sake of distinction that I ever sign it. I like it in no language, and from childhood it has been unpleasant to me. I never call those by their names who have not pleasing ones, even if I should otherwise wish to do so. For instance, I do not like the name of Henrietta. For the name of Charlotte I have, as I have often told you, a great predilection, but I do not like the abbreviation.

You wish to know first about my health, which is a subject I should willingly pass over. It is really as good as I can wish it to be. I can hardly call it the result of the regimen here, for I was well when I came, and the baths could but leave me the same. Indeed they have done more. They strengthen, or have some healing effect, without one's being exactly conscious of any change. The pleasing sensation of the bath itself, which is owing to the nature of the water,

cannot be described. I cannot say that the use of it is weakening, and yet I feel more tired in the evening than at home. This may be owing to climbing the hills, and to the influence of the air, which is fatiguing to those who are not accustomed to it. One consequence of the latter is certainly a great appetite. I do not eat more than at home, because I keep an invariable rule in eating and drinking; but the food is very bad, and I eat here on the mountains what I should leave untouched at an inn on the plain. The weather is changeable. It was most beautiful when I came. I have had a fire for some days, and others have the same. To-day it is bright again, and it is remarkable how brilliant everything looks as soon as the sun shines. I wish you could see it. I have generally been able to go out once or twice every day. The bad weather at this time of the year generally arises from thunder-storms, which are frequent on the high distant mountains, but are only felt here by the changes of weather and of the temperature. All the mountain-streams, too, swell with the rain. I have never seen the waterfall so full, and I think we have never had so much thunder. The waterfall is very near the room I occupy, which is the one I had when here with my lamented wife, but I have not now, as in former years, her sitting-room.

I am spending my time pleasantly—in society occasionally, but chiefly in solitude. I have met with only one person here whom I know—a very old man from Munich. I avoid having many acquaintances, and am very rarely even with him. I am not desirous, as many are, of doing everything in society. It is particularly annoying when people join you in a walk;—there is then no escaping from them.

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You write, dear Charlotte, of your earnest longing for peace of mind. It certainly cannot be said that a person can procure for himself this peace under all circumstances; but still he may do much. I have not always had the tranquillity and calmness which you praise, and I know

how many struggles it has cost me to acquire it. I remain by my simple conviction that the inward feeling of happiness is no gift of fate, and comes not from without: a man must himself attain it by unceasing efforts;—and it is consoling to know that it may always be so attained. God himself cannot make a man always or generally externally happy, always healthy, rich, and successful to the extent his wishes. He has with greater wisdom made man subject to the conditions of humanity, and these do not always permit such success. But inwardly happy he can always make us, for he has placed the requisites for this in our hearts: reverence, adoration, and love for Him, and trust in Him,—these are the feelings through which his peace comes to us. You know and feel all this, and it would be impossible to say anything new to you on the subject. I can only urge you to cultivate those tranquil feelings you do possess, and particularly to avoid any disturbing influences. I am very much grieved not to see you more cheerful. But I must repeat it,—another, however sincere may be his interest, can do little or nothing to assist you in this. There is nothing in your circumstances to cause any hindrance to your attaining entire composure of mind.

You express a wish to send, besides your letters, some notes in which you may express your sentiments on various subjects and ideas, on which you desire my correction, and you ask whether and how often you may send them. Everything that gives you pleasure gratifies me: I have no objection to the plan, and your notes shall always be welcome. But I can hardly tell you when you should write and send them. Send them unhesitatingly as often as you like, and do not be uneasy. You fear, as you say, that they may accumulate. But nothing can be determined beforehand respecting it. You know, dear Charlotte, that I am always willing to enter into your ideas; and I repeat again, that I wish you would live less in the material world, and elevate yourself by spiritual contemplations, which

above all things raise us beyond earthly limits, and relieve us from earthly pressure. Once more, write and send as often as you like. But you must forgive me if it happens that I do not read and answer in my next letter all you send; for the time I can devote to friendly correspondence is limited, and I must be careful of my eyes; so I must request your kind forbearance. Farewell.—Ever yours,

H.

LETTER XVII.

TEGEL, August 12, 1830.

I returned here safely on the evening of the 2d, and I feel quite at home again. I met with no accident on my journey. The heat was frequently intense, but I do not suffer from that. For part of the way the dust was very troublesome, but it has not injured my eyes. What I enjoy most is the thought that I have again a year before me during which I am certain not to leave this place. I prize this assurance for two reasons:—I shall have repose and uninterrupted residence in the same place,—and besides, I am particularly attached to this spot. I have not the same predilection for Berlin, but I am tied to it by so many circumstances that I prefer it to any town in Germany. Besides, my position here enables me to enjoy the advantages always connected with a residence in the neighbourhood of a town, *i. e.* receiving visits, &c., and yet having the power to avoid what would annoy me. Not that there is more to disturb one in Berlin than in any other town, but one is subject in all to the necessity of seeing something of society. Though I have in a great measure relieved myself from this necessity, the trouble of obtaining this relief, in itself a burden and an annoyance, is continually recurring; for the people cannot believe in the continuance of a wish for such an abandonment of society, and they endeavour again and again to draw me into closer association with them. It is not that personally I have much to do with them; but they cannot bear that any one should differ from them, or do otherwise than as they do.

I cannot describe to you with what calm and heartfelt joy I return home again. I am always glad to be with my

children,—and this is the only society that can give me much pleasure, because it is connected with my deepest feelings, and is one with that which binds me to the remembrance of the past. Every object here is in harmony with my tone of mind. Under all circumstances, even disturbing ones, and in situations which are not favourable to the work which I purpose to do, I am in the habit of still working, and I feel convinced that the work does not prosper less than under circumstances apparently more favourable. I have my work at Gastein too, and have generally accomplished what I have undertaken. But I never work anywhere so willingly as here. It appears as if thoughts and feelings returned more easily among the natural objects where they have recurred the most frequently, and as I have been here for a longer or shorter time in all the various periods of my life, I can here better than elsewhere go through the whole circle of my individual opinions. For the rest of the year I have fixed my residence at Gastein, and have smiled at myself whilst I appeared serious. The man who can be secure of no one day following another, yet forms his plans for a year, and considers them as certain! This appears to me doubly singular in respect to such a thing as a journey to the baths. It is very much my habit, and even according to my principle, in forming my plans for life and arranging my labours and employments, not to reckon upon the possible interruption which death may cause, nor to calculate upon the probable duration of life. I should undertake the longest piece of work without a consideration of the sort. We accomplish as much as is permitted by a fate that is often sudden and unexpected: sometimes a longer time may be allowed; at others, circumstances demand the work more quickly. If a man is called away suddenly, the thread is cut, and he enters upon a state of which he knows nothing, but of which he can assert with confidence that there no feeling of regret for work left unfinished here will be allowed to enter.

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I received your letter with great pleasure, dear Charlotte, and the contents have gratified me still more. I am very sorry that my letters reach you so late, but I am not surprised at it. Letters which are posted during a journey, when one does not know exactly the day of the departure of the mail, are very likely to be mistimed; besides, the course of post between Gastein and the eastern provinces is very tedious. Some, who are always inclined to be suspicious, believe that the letters are taken to Vienna, where they are opened and read. I cannot believe this with respect to letters whose address shows that they contain nothing of political interest, but refer to private affairs only. I think the irregularity arises from other causes,—very probably from the arrangements of the post-office. Neither ought we to be too ready to believe the charge sometimes made, that the letters are sent by a circuitous route for the sake of the increased postage.

It has given me very great pleasure, dear Charlotte, to perceive that your tone of mind is more peaceful and cheerful, more in harmony with life, than was formerly the case. I earnestly entreat you to do all you can to maintain this temper. Experience will confirm to you what I have so often said, that man can do much for himself. God would not have given to man a disposition so excitable, and so easily moved to grief and sorrow, if he had not bestowed at the same time strength to control the feelings and to moderate the grief. He gives nothing directly; it is His will that man should always attain His blessing through his own efforts—we cannot say *deserve* it, for the human cannot in this way reach the divine. Man and his actions must be the medium for all that God bestows, as if it were his own work alone. The seed that produces the fruit of the spirit goes through the same process as that which springs from the earth. The fruit will not come immediately from God, nor from Nature: it must go through all the conditions necessary to bring it to perfection, and if man,

even under the most favourable sky, and with the most fruitful soil, wishes to be certain of his harvest, he must bestow his labour and "the sweat of his brow." This is still more the case with the fruit of the spirit and the heart. But the certainty of success is here greater: no disturbing influences of nature can offer interruption here. When unfavourable dispositions arise, strength is given to the soul to struggle against them, and a higher blessing then crowns success. The success of these efforts is exactly in proportion to the earnestness with which a man strives to attain the end. With respect to yourself, dear Charlotte, it does not appear to me that any painful effort or struggle is necessary: all that is required is merely to keep yourself open to cheerful impressions and tranquil feelings, which exercise a favourable influence upon the heart, and which must arise in rich abundance in such a mind as yours. In reference to this, I consider it very important, as I wrote to you lately, that you should engage in some intellectual occupation. You will then, led by this interest, seek recreation from your customary work in this employment. On this account I am very glad that you speak in your letter of a leisure time which you have in prospect..

I have been interrupted several times. Farewell. Yours,

H.

[Note by the Editress.]

It could not escape my observation that every benevolent and delicate allusion was but a preparation for what must come, and it was impossible to deceive myself respecting the final issue. These presentiments filled my heart with sorrow. The kind and inspiring letters were still regular and unabridged, but alas! they were written with greater effort, and were more difficult to decipher. How could my deeply sorrowing heart retain its cheerfulness when it was oppressed by such threatening forebodings! Every letter expressed his tender consideration and earnest desire to elevate my tone of mind, and to lead me to prepare myself for what was inevitable; this is the tenor also of the next letter.

LETTER XVIII.

TEGEL, Sept. 7, 1830.

Your letter of the 31st has given me much pleasure, dear Charlotte, because it is written in a tranquil, really happy spirit. I thank you very much for it. I have now resumed all my old habits. My state of health is as good as I could desire, and I do not know that I have anything to complain of; but when you speak of my robust health, the expression requires some limitation. My health is good, because I do not suffer any pain, and because I maintain and promote it by the regularity of my mode of life. But the signs of advancing age are very apparent in me, as in other men who number as many years, and I am even less vigorous than is usual at my age. Another sign of declining strength you may perceive in my handwriting, the unevenness and want of firmness in which arises, not from deficiency of eyesight, but entirely from want of power in my hand. This is certainly the consequence of age, but it has come so early and so suddenly upon me, that I must consider it rather as the consequence of the great trial I endured in my wife's death. When a man's married life has been like mine—and no second union can be the same—the rending asunder of these ties is not merely a change of circumstances, but it necessitates the entering upon an entirely new life. I do not complain—I do not weep;—the death of a person, particularly in advanced age, is a natural occurrence, inseparable from humanity. I look for neither help nor consolation, for the grief which seeks these is not the highest, and does not come from the depths of the heart. I am not unhappy: indeed I am happy and contented in the only way that I can be so now,—but I am not as I

was in former years. I associate with men and the world only so far as I can derive ideas from them, or so far as I can be useful to them. But I have no other wish than to be alone: every interruption to my solitude, every visit, if it be only for an hour, is unpleasant to me, even if I like those who seek me. I do not wish to indulge this feeling, but it has gathered strength during the last year, and I have no doubt that it will continue to do so. You may suppose, that as I lived so long in Berlin I have amongst my acquaintances many very intimate friends of both sexes. I was accustomed to see them every week or oftener, but since my unhappy loss I have not seen them above three or four times. They feel for me, and a natural delicacy prevents their intruding upon me without a particular invitation. But I invite no one; I leave that to my children; —and if any one is with them I do not like to be obliged to see them. I tell you this, because you wish to have an idea of my situation.

My eyes are no worse, but they are not likely to be better. Nay more, as a man should look upon all things firmly, I say to myself that this weakness must increase with age, and that not improbably a time will come when I must give up reading and writing. I have already given up doing so by artificial light. I often sit for three or four hours together in the evening, apparently doing nothing; —but I cannot say that this time is useless to me, and still less that it passes away unpleasantly. This musing upon ideas and remembrances has something very attractive in it, and as it helps one to think earnestly and connectedly, so it assists the work of the following day. I much prefer sitting thus alone, to engaging in conversation. I often, moreover, read aloud in the early part of the evening.

This has been a remarkably beautiful day, — a mild, pleasant air, no wind, and a clear blue sky. But it is very autumnal here: the foliage is already yellow, and when you see an avenue, you remark that the trees are not so full of

leaf as in summer. It is incredible how rapidly the time passes. A week—a month, are gone,—and, almost before you can look about you, a whole year! It appears scarcely worth the trouble of repeating so trite and well-known a saying, but I have never before experienced the feeling so strongly. It may be that I measure time more according to the work done, the employment of it,—and time appears valuable only in proportion as something is accomplished, though that something may fall far short of what we expect. No day produces so much as it might, and from this loss of single days, what a grave deficiency in the whole! I welcome the winter, because even in my position, quiet and full of leisure as it always is, I can work with more energy at this season.

I was surprised to find by your letter that you were so far advanced in the knowledge of astronomy as to find great enjoyment in it. It is a delightful study, and peculiarly suitable, I may say, to your solitary and quiet life. You are quite right when you say that the contemplation of the sky at night fills the weary heart with consolation, and elevates the soul from earth, which, in the stillness of the hour, one forgets for a while, with its endless griefs and manifold sorrows. I am very glad that the sight of the stars has such an effect upon you, and particularly that you have been led to the study by my recommendation; but I am very sorry that your feelings still retain so gloomy a complexion.

You mention the hypothesis of Kant respecting our future residence upon Jupiter. I believe we have before spoken of this subject in our letters. I am sorry, as you are attached to the bold idea, as you call it, to be obliged to say that I cannot sympathise with you in this respect. I cannot understand how Kant can entertain it. But I will return to it, as it appears a favourite notion of yours.

You wish further in your letter, that, according to my often-repeated advice that you should enter upon some ab-

stract and interesting mental occupation, I would tell you what you might undertake. You fear that the study would either take too much time, or require a minute apparatus. This is certainly a difficult question; for the choice must depend upon your own taste, and of this you are the only judge. But I will endeavour to fulfil your request. I follow, however, a hint which your letter gives me. You speak of the earth, and certainly the study of this must follow that of the sky. What do you particularly wish to understand respecting the earth? I think that the earth and its inhabitants are so closely connected, that any work which can interest you must keep this connexion in view, and not treat either subject separately. I know only one book that fulfils these conditions; that is Ritter's "Description of the Earth." It is one of the most spirited, ingenious books that has appeared for a long time. Ritter treats of the description of the earth, or Geography, in quite a new way, —divides the globe into its natural divisions of mountains, valleys, and streams,—and above all, describes the general condition of the human race without entering into the slightest political discussion. On this account it will be particularly suitable to your purpose. It will also please you from its not being a book to be hastily perused, but to be thoroughly read and studied. You are quite right not to like reading merely for reading's sake. You must first have a clear idea of what you wish to learn. This Ritter will effect for you respecting the earth, if you begin the study properly. You ought not, in my opinion, to spend more than an hour a-day in reading this book;—this, with few exceptions, you will be able to do. Then you must in thought reperuse what you have read, and so make it completely your own. This will bring your work and your thoughts into intimate union. If you are particularly interested in any point, you may read other works on the same subject. One defect of the book is the want of maps. The descriptions of the ranges of mountains and the course

of streams are, however, so graphic, that if at any time one has been accustomed to the use of a map, the imagination supplies all deficiencies. I should certainly think that this book would afford you for some time an agreeable and useful employment. Ritter has as yet treated only of Asia and Africa; and I would advise you, after the introduction, to take Asia first, although Africa takes precedence in the work. Asia, if we go back into past ages, was the most important division of the known world. There flourished religion, philosophy, and poetry, at a time when we do not know with certainty how Europe was inhabited. All the civilization and learning also, which we now enjoy, are associated with Asia, and may be referred to that source.

You mention the late disturbances. Since you wrote they have increased, and are prevalent even in our own neighbourhood. It is painful to see how passion and recklessness threaten the peace we have so long enjoyed. But in time all will subside again into tranquillity. The things of the world are ever rising and falling, and in perpetual change, and this change must be according to the will of God, as he has bestowed upon man neither the wisdom nor the power to enable him to check it. The great lesson in these things is, that man must strengthen himself doubly at such times to fulfil his duty and to do what is right, and must seek his happiness and inward peace from objects which cannot be taken away from him.

Farewell.—Keep yourself calm, and be assured of my sincere and unchangeable sympathy. H.

LETTER XIX.

TEGEL, October 6, 1830.

I have received your letter of the 28th, dear Charlotte, and I thank you very much for it. We have had remarkably beautiful weather for eight or ten days, and I have enjoyed it very much, and have generally been out in the afternoon. I continue so well and strong, that if I wished to dwell upon some weak point, I should hardly know what to complain of. I tell you this first, because you have repeatedly said that you always look first for the part of my letter which mentions my health. It is perhaps wrong to value it so much, and as it were to challenge fate and *summon* happiness. In a great measure this idea is superstition, but not entirely so. When pride and self-exultation are united either to a firm inward confidence, or to a great and fearful love of change, they are easily overthrown. This is called the chastisement of God, or it is believed to be the invariable law of nature that all boasting must be humbled. This fact is never denied. Experience teaches it; it forms a part of the belief of all ages, and many nations have preserved the saying in familiar proverbs, illustrated it in narratives, and handed it down to posterity. I cannot with justice apply it to myself, however. I speak to you of my health and my well-being, because I know that it gives you pleasure, and is a satisfaction and a consolation to you, and because the very expression of the natural emotions of a heart grateful to Providence is itself an offering of thanks. I cherish no presumption. I have the firm conviction, and now the more strongly that the external world has less hold upon me, that change is a necessary condition of all the circumstances that render the life of a man peaceful,

free from care, rich in enjoyment, and even enviable; and certainly I should be far from considering health in old age as any exception to the rule. But I have not the slightest anxiety about it. I enjoy every blessing with thankfulness, but I cling to nothing. I do not live in hope, and as I expect nothing from the future, I cannot be disappointed. I must honestly confess, whether it be wrong or not, that I cherish no hope on this side the grave. I believe in a future; I consider a meeting again possible, when equally strong mutual feelings render two beings as it were one. But my mind is scarcely made up on this point. Human ideas and representations are of no avail, and any others are here impossible. I look on death with perfect composure, but with no ardent desire or ecstasy. In the present life I seek more for activity than enjoyment. But that expression is hardly correct, for enjoyment depends upon activity: the two are united. There is also a bliss which flows like a free pure gift from Heaven. This cannot be won by direct effort, and it is deplorable to see the restless craving for it. But the greatest enjoyment, the great happiness that cannot be torn away by any power, lies in the past, and in the consideration that though happiness is certainly a great, an inestimable good, in the enrichment of the soul through joy and sorrow, and the elevation of all noble feelings, consists the true and final aim of man, for all on earth is changing and transient in its nature. In this view, the retrospect of life does not sink into a gloomy brooding over its vanished joys or its experienced evils, but is absorbed in the activity which employs the mind in the present hour. So it is with me, and the emotions in which my life principally consists are now all removed to the past, accompanied certainly by a degree of melancholy, but so sweet and calm, a happiness so independent of men and of destiny, that nothing can tear it away, or even weaken it.

I am very glad to find that you enter into my idea of pursuing some abstract intellectual occupation. It interests

me very much. What I proposed to you, I consider very proper and suitable;—but perhaps it is too uniform, and too much an exercise of the understanding merely. After further consideration something else has occurred to me, which will at least show you that I wish to be of use to you. I should think Frederic Leopold Stolberg's "History of the Christian Religion" would be a suitable book to be not merely read but studied by you. Tell me whether you know anything of it. If you have never seen it, buy a volume, read a part of it, and write to me about it. If you should like it, you might continue the study of it. If that should be the case, it is a book that one ought to possess rather than borrow, because it may be read and returned to in different moods. I should like to send it to you, and ask you to receive it as a remembrance from me. If you do not know the book and wish to read some as a specimen, I recommend the fifth volume. This contains the life of Christ himself, and will also give you the best idea of whether you agree with Stolberg's views. He had, as you know, gone over to the Catholic religion. But as far as I can judge, this has had no influence upon his writings. I myself have only read a small part of them, but I know some, and particularly women, whose judgment I value as much as my own, who have not been in the least disturbed or unsettled in their opinions by reading this work. As an exclusively religious book, the Bible of course holds the first place, and none other is required. But I do not look upon Stolberg's work in the light of a merely religious book. It is a sort of Church History,—not written for the scholar, or for the curious inquirer into dogmas, but with a moral and edifying purpose. It shows also how the Christian religion has improved the heads and still more the hearts of men. It is certainly the great characteristic of the human race, that religion is implanted in the very nature of man. The religion of Christ came into the world by especial ordination. It has not taken away the freedom

of the human soul, but has rather brought a higher degree of it, for certainly religious feelings have no value but as they arise spontaneously in the heart. Religion is sometimes received and sometimes rejected, until at last its power is established. But even when received into the hearts of men, it assumes different aspects according to the peculiarities of the spirit and character of those who acknowledge it. Even among the Apostles, this was evident from the first. How different the manifestations of the religious sentiment in John and in Peter! Afterwards also, remarkable dissensions arose;—passions and worldly views were blended with the purer emotions, and thence arose profanation and abuse. But one always sees in these religious histories the divine element beside the earthly,—still the One Eternal and Everlasting, like a sun shedding light and warmth, though more or less hidden by the veil of the earthly. When I was very young, I read Church History with great eagerness, and few studies ever interested me more.

Farewell. With constant and unalterable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XX.

TEGEL, Nov. 6, 1830.

I received your letter of the 26th a few days since, dear Charlotte, and I thank you sincerely for it. It is written in so tranquil a spirit that it has given me double pleasure, for I am convinced that this spirit is the most conducive to your happiness.

The beautiful season of autumn is fitted to give the mind and heart as much serenity and cheerfulness as each individual, from his mental constitution, is capable of attaining. I think I never remember so invariably fine an October and early part of November. In previous years we have often had snow by this time, which then lay the whole winter. Now the air is mild as in summer, and only now and then a rainy day occurs to interrupt the cloudless blue of the clear sky. Yesterday the stars shone brightly as I returned from a walk, and to-day it was fine long after the sun set. The monthly roses are in their richest and most luxuriant bloom. There is certainly something remarkable in this weather, as if Heaven wished to make amends to earth for the last long winter. But though I enjoy this fine weather so much, autumn is not my favourite season. The dropping of the leaves has something so sad, and gives to nature—which at first is all richness and luxuriance—a character of poverty. The trees in autumn have to me something more repulsive than in winter; for then the destruction is complete, but in autumn it is continually going on before our eyes. The poor trees appear so tossed about and ill-used by the wind, that you pity them as if they were human beings. In the early autumn, many people admire the varied tints which the foliage assumes. I have often heard

this said, but I could never find pleasure in it, and would willingly give up all this pomp of colouring in nature. How much more beautiful is the uniform green of summer! It would be a mistake to call it monotonous. It has so many shades, from the bright and delicate to the darkest, that the variety and the shading afford a pleasing change for the eye to rest upon; and the shades of colouring being faint, are not so glaring as those of autumn.

My health continues good. It would require some serious illness to change the simplicity and uniformity of my mode of life, and this very simplicity is the most likely means to ward off illness. Health is a blessing that I prize particularly on account of the uninterrupted activity it allows. But I could hardly say that I dread an illness, or look upon it as a great evil. I was often ill before my thirty-fifth year, but since that time more rarely. Twice I have been very near death, but I cannot say that sickness has ever appeared to me very painful or distressing. With me—perhaps it may not be so with others—the body only is weakened in illness, and not the spirit: the extinction of the physical strength, and the interruption of the usual activity, seem rather to render the mental powers more acute. A man originates nothing,—but he muses, forms plans, and prepares himself for greater usefulness upon his recovery. The only real annoyance to me in illness has been, even from childhood, the great compassion for the invalid, the care, the uneasiness, even the pity and sympathy. These are quite natural, praiseworthy, and deserving of gratitude, but to me so burdensome that they make illness really an evil. On this account I was very glad that, on both the occasions when I was dangerously ill, I happened accidentally to be quite alone, without even any of my own family.

The assurances you give me that you are not anxious and unhappy, afford me great pleasure,—and I quite believe them. I do not attribute to you a disposition in which

anxiety and disquiet are blameable. It is natural and touching that you should be easily excited and affected. I can understand, too, the feeling of weariness of life, though I have never myself experienced it. Even without being unhappy, life may be imbued with a feeling of weakness,—I might almost say it must be so when it ceases to be viewed by man as a progressive state, and is considered rather as an eternal round. In this view the sameness of life must necessarily weary, and its insignificance, when compared to the higher spiritual existence, be deeply felt; but this feeling disappears when man looks upon it as a step to higher progress.

In what you say of Stolberg's work I certainly cannot entirely disagree. Fifteen volumes are a great many, and perhaps it would not be well for you to study religious subjects so much. But see how the fifth volume pleases you, and then send me word whether you wish to have the whole work.

To return to the choice of an employment calculated to promote your cheerfulness. I know not, dear Charlotte, whether the mental occupation I advised for you requires so much preparation as you tell me was the case with R. At least this was not in my thoughts when I first wrote to you: such laboured study would certainly deprive you of the necessary freedom. There appears to me another and more simple method. Wherefore should a man know and learn? It is much better and more beneficial to read and think. Reading provides material for thought, because we must have an object—a thread, as it were, on which to *string* the thoughts. But for this one requires a book only occasionally, just to take in the hand; it may be laid down or exchanged for another. When a person has done this for some weeks, he must be deficient in all mental activity and energy, if many ideas do not occur to him which he will have pleasure in prosecuting,—subjects on which he desires to know more;—thence originates a self-chosen study, not

one adopted by the advice of another. This plan I should think would be acceptable to all women who lead an active intellectual life. As we have now discussed the matter, and taken every view of it, you have only to choose which plan you will follow. The mere consideration of an employment is itself an occupation, and the preparation is a part of the usefulness of the work. I shall willingly assist you as much as I can.

I must ask you to send your next letter on the 23d. I sincerely wish that you may remain well, at least that nothing external may disturb your repose.

Maintain your mental tranquillity, and be assured of my unalterable sympathy and friendship.—Yours, H.

LETTER XXI.

TEGEL, Dec. 4, 1830.

Your letter, begun on the 6th and finished on the 17th of last month, dear Charlotte, has given me very great pleasure. It expresses so clearly your inmost feelings, it is written in so much more peaceful a tone, referring both to external events and earnest contemplations, and its contents have interested me so much, that I thank you doubly for this letter, though I welcome every one as a mark of your attachment to me. I am also glad that you did not wait for the day I fixed for your writing, but have followed your own inclination: this is the best plan with respect to letter-writing, which will bear no restraint, but must always have full freedom. It has also given me pleasure to know sooner that you are engaged in an interesting employment, and to hear your opinion respecting my proposal. I do not care about this fixing of days, and merely continue the practice because you tell me you like it. You remember how the habit originated. I will continue to fix the day, but I repeat my request that you will deviate from it whenever you have any inducement to do so;—I mean, that you will write *sooner* without minding what I have said, but never do it *later*. It would cause too long an interval between your letters.

We have had a remarkable year:—do you not think so? The weather is still very pleasant for the season. I enjoy it very much, and I am particularly glad that the first fall of snow has been so long delayed. For a short time it is very agreeable to see a sparkling, white, pure, unruffled mantle of snow; but after a while this uniform vesture of nature becomes wearisome. The present winter is, at least

here, not at all damp, and therefore not injurious to the health. At any rate, mine continues very good;—I suffer in no way. I live with my usual regularity, take daily exercise, and feel the advantage of this simple mode of life. I have nothing particular to complain of with respect to my eyes. Although I am very careful of them, I think I can perceive the weakness gradually increasing. But it would be foolish to dwell much upon this: it is enough that the progress is very slow. It is the same with the unsteadiness of my hand in writing. You will be the best judge of the increase of this, but it also is very gradual. In the meantime I write very little myself, and shall still further limit the quantity. I devote the evening hours to dictation, as that saves my eyes. So now you know all particulars about me.

I thank you very much for the full communication of your opinion upon Stolberg's Religious History;—I was very much interested in it. I know little of the book myself; but I had heard very favourable opinions, especially from women, and that determined me to call your attention to it. Besides, I have myself always had a great predilection for histories of the church and of opinion. You judge Stolberg's secession to the Catholic church with more harshness than I should do. Such things arise in every head and heart, and it is scarcely possible for another to understand the threads on which they hang. Stolberg was not a man of great independence of character, and possessed neither a large nor a long head. In his poems also he shows no depth or originality. They affect us like the memories of youth, and have a lively vivacity, great strength of feeling, and something very correct in the sentiment. Poetical they must ever be thought.

After the trial you have had of Stolberg's book, we will lay it aside, and you can occupy yourself with something else. I am exceedingly glad that you are pleased with Ritter, and that you agree with his views. The work is at

present in two volumes, containing the description of Asia and Africa only; and the author, instead of continuing it, has published a second edition, of which only the first volume has as yet appeared. You have given me very great gratification, dear Charlotte, by your frankness in saying that instead of Stolberg you should prefer receiving Ritter from me. I have given an order to my bookseller to send you the work. I have always thought that a book is a peculiarly suitable present to a friend. It is read again and again, sought only in chosen moments,—not used like a cup or a glass or a piece of furniture, at any moment indifferently,—and the friend is remembered in the hour of purest enjoyment. The book may afford you more pleasure as being my gift.

I can suggest no work that treats exclusively of Palestine. It is your wish to learn the state and history of that country immediately after the time of Christ. The descriptions of recent travellers, Chateaubriand and others, will do you little or no good. I myself know little of the country. Besides the Bible, the only authorities for its ancient history are the profane writers of Greece and Rome, and the information is so scattered through their works, that you could not easily find it. Josephus alone treats of the Jewish history exclusively. I really do not know whether there is a German or French translation of his work, but I think it probable. You will receive this information at any library. With respect to other authors I can only give you this advice: You must read the account of the Jews in some very full General History. The best of these would be a General History translated from the English, or Rollin's Ancient History. Rollin has been a favourite author of mine since I was quite a young man. He is a very credulous writer, who is too apt to receive statements without due examination; but there is something interesting about him, and his narratives are very naïve and simple. In Rollin you find all that has been written upon Antiquities so far

as in accordance with the Bible. If you wish for more, there is a book of old Michaelis of Göttingen, who died long since, which throws light upon some points of Jewish Antiquities; it is entitled "The Mosaic Rituals." In this way, continuing the study of these books along with Ritter, you will acquire a tolerable idea of Palestine and its inhabitants in the olden times.

I much approve of your desire to have a clear and intimate knowledge of this part of the world. The interest of other countries must soon be exhausted, but this has one of a higher, nobler, more permanent nature. The inquiries respecting all that is connected with Palestine are so intimately blended with the study of the Bible, that it must make you familiar with the contents of the Holy Scriptures, and thence you must imbibe some of its spirit. You have, as I know, studied the Bible much; you must also be aware of the necessity of being able to associate each occurrence with its own locality, and of having a correct idea of these localities, and also of the sequence of events. I believe that the wish to know more of these countries originated entirely with yourself. This was what I desired,—to see you engage in some employment at your own suggestion. The mind can be really interested only in what is freely chosen.

I see Ritter frequently, as we are both members of the Academy of Science. He is a remarkably amiable man in his manners and disposition. He is very religious, and possesses a gentleness and mildness which are very attractive. He is generally beloved in the town.

I shall be glad if you will write to me on the 21st of December. Preserve your health, dear Charlotte,—maintain your composure and cheerfulness,—and believe me, with constant sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXII.

TEGEL, Jan. 4, 1831.

I write so few letters now, that it occurs to me in scribbling the date (for I can really call my writing only that name), that it is for the first time this year. Receive, my dear Charlotte, my heartfelt good wishes. May no external adversity lie before you, and may you have the necessary strength to maintain your peace of mind if it should be assailed, as may be the case with any human being!

From the manner in which people, especially those of the higher ranks, spend their lives, the changes of the year have now lost their true significance. In fact, a new year begins with each new day: the seasons make the only real division. But even these have scarcely more influence over us, than as they affect our ease and comfort. To me, however, the close of a year is always an epoch which makes me examine myself. I compare what I *have* done, with what I might have done. I take counsel with my feelings, approve or blame, confirm myself in old resolutions, form new ones, and so generally spend the first day of the year in leisure. I smile at myself for thus wasting my good resolutions in idleness, but it is not so much idleness as repose, and that is often more wholesome than labour. At the periodical return of these contemplations, it is pleasant to think that a year more of life is closed. This does not arise from any longing for death. I have no feeling of this sort, because life and death, inseparably connected, are but developments of the same being, and it would be childish and thoughtless to desire to disturb and change, by a narrow wish, what has, physically and morally, its point of maturity. Still less is it satiety of life. I have had the

same feeling in the happiest times, and now that I am no longer susceptible of external impressions of enjoyment, or at least seek none, but live calmly in myself and my remembrances, I have still less reason to be dissatisfied with life. But the lapse of time has something pleasing to me. Time does not pass away void; it brings and takes and leaves behind, and man may continually be richer for it,—not indeed always in enjoyment, but in something higher; —I do not mean barren experience,—no, it is an elevation of man's consciousness into greater clearness and fulness:—it is that he is more truly himself, and understands more clearly what he is and what he ought to be. This, as the centre-point of man's present and future being, is the highest and the most important for him.

This, dear Charlotte, will make you understand better what I mean when I say that I prefer old age to youth. My own wish would be, that I should be old while all around me remained young. Others would be pleased with this too, and make no objection to this kind of selfishness. But to speak seriously,—at least what others would call seriously, for I am myself in earnest,—I am far from falling into the error of not admitting that youth in a certain sense is more beautiful and delightful, and that it has in itself something higher than old age. Youth is really of more importance, since little of the individual is at that period developed, the whole working as a whole, and the life having as yet brought out few of the characteristic tendencies. There is also a great difference in the two sexes. The appearance, and even the reality of old age, is more natural to man. In him we value more the qualities which really belong to old age, and do not require from him the freshness and charms of youth. He may always remain the same, even if he loses corporeal strength. This is not quite the case with women; and the power of self-control, and the elevation of spontaneous self-denial, through which the old age of a woman can retain so much of youthful vigour, can only be

attained by few. But in woman also, old age brings much to light that was vainly sought in youth; and this every man of sense and feeling will treasure in preference.

I am very glad to find you are interested about Palestine. It is certainly better for you not to be engaged constantly upon the same subject; but when you have left it, it is by no means desirable that you should quite give yourself up to self-contemplation; you should rather seek in external circumstances something which may interest you, and then you will be indirectly led back to yourself.

I fully agree with you in what you say respecting the difference between ancient and modern history. You find yourself upon quite different ground in the former. It is true, man was the same in time past as he is now; but the circumstances were more natural and simple, and, which is the main point, were conceived in a fresher spirit, and better apprehended and treated. The narrative also was more eloquent, and above all poetical. Poetry was then rather nature than art; it was not as yet distinct from prose. This poetical fire, this brilliancy of imagery, extended over all antiquity, which indeed we view only in this mirror. For we must acknowledge that we see many things in a brighter light than reality. I will not say that the manner in which these things were related was erroneous. Not so:—But the colouring is different. We see men and their actions in other colours. A multitude of lesser details is wanting also; we do not see all—often only the most conspicuous traits, collected with great industry. Everything therefore appears stately and colossal.

I suppose that in this pleasant sunny weather you go every day into your garden. I let no day pass without a walk. But the sun sometimes escapes me, as I have no special reference to it in my walks. I always go out, summer and winter, in the afternoon, and at this season the sun sinks in mist at noon.

My health—for I see I have not yet mentioned it—is

very good. I have not had any colds this winter;—I can only complain of the infirmities of old age; but these are natural, and I bear them without wondering at them.

Will you send your next letter, dear Charlotte, on the 25th? Fare you well, and rest assured of my unchangeable sympathy. H.

LETTER XXIII.

TEGEL, Feb. 5, 1831.

I have received the letter which you began at Christmas and finished on the 25th of January, dear Charlotte, and I thank you very much for the great pleasure I have derived from the much more cheerful tone in which it is written. Your expression, that for years you have not felt so cheerful at Christmas as now, has been a great comfort to me. I always believed that you would attain that state of inward tranquillity and balance of mind in which desire and possession appear one without any sacrifice,—in which, whilst the present is yours to enjoy, you are not bereft of all happiness,—and in which, for many things you must regret, you purchase for yourself an internal compensation independent of circumstances. You might attain this and be sufficiently happy, if you could maintain this disposition. If I have contributed to this, or am now in a position to do so, it demands no thanks;—but I am willing to receive yours, because I know that they are the genuine sentiments of your heart. You may be perfectly assured that as long as I live, my interest in your welfare will continue the same. It can undergo no change: it rests upon the kindly feelings with which you have yourself inspired me: it seeks nothing, and has no other end in view but to do you good.

I can understand, dear Charlotte, how holidays are really such to you, and not so in name merely. They relieve you from external work, which, if not unpleasant, is at least fatiguing and wearisome from its dull uniformity,—and they bring perfect leisure in which you may follow your chosen employments. To gain this freedom of spirit is in all situations a great happiness, to which, however, a man engaged

in higher and more important avocations, as I know by experience, never can attain. For him there is no appointed holiday, and he can rarely give himself one.

I do not know how it is, but I do not remember the time ever seeming to pass so quickly. Months appear like weeks, and since the beginning of November the cold season has passed with lightning speed. Every day has its own occupations, and that makes one less aware of the flight of time, and consequently it appears to pass more rapidly. But as this was still more my case in former times, there must be some other reason. In no case have I been eager for the development of events. I have always thought, in respect to every remarkable occurrence, that in a few years it will belong to history, and from this view will present quite a different aspect, and that especially it will lose the changeful character which the present always possesses.

I am very much grieved on your account at the death you mention. Even supposing you love solitude, the loss of the opportunity of friendly intercourse may be severely felt; and with this, in the present case, is associated the feeling, that through this loss the closest ties of a whole family have been severed. As far as I can gather from your account, your friend died before the new year. You had been rejoicing on Christmas-day that the year 1830, which you dreaded so much, had nearly passed away without your having experienced any distress. So I understood what you said, and a Greek proverb has occurred to me as being very appropriate, of which I have often been reminded by unlooked-for occurrences. It is used only to express, that in the shortest space of time a change from the most secure hopes and the most certainly-calculated expectations may occur. The words of the figurative expression run thus:— "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip." It is such a natural, expressive, and significant image—it tells so shortly and forcibly how something may intervene between us and happiness, however near it appears! But is it really

true that you have had gloomy forebodings concerning the past year, or did you speak partly in jest? It seems to me very strange to conceive confident and alarming expectations concerning a thing so little to be calculated upon and judged of as a newly beginning year. Still less can I imagine how some persons consider certain numbers to be ominous, and bearing portents of evil. Nevertheless I have occasionally met with such. I consider it very important to keep free from all such ideas, and if in an unguarded moment we should yield to them, they ought to be dismissed as soon as possible. Providence has certainly not intended that the future should be clear before men's eyes: if He had designed this, He would not give such dark and mysterious intimations as these, but would remove the veil from the spiritual eye of man. Forgive my making these remarks;—perhaps they are unnecessary. But it is from real interest in you that I wish you would spare yourself such apprehensions, which only proceed from a dark presentiment, that after quiet and cool deliberation is seen to have no foundation. You will tell me that those who feel strongly and warmly, cannot deliberately calmly and coolly. You are right if you mean the susceptibility to excitement without any particular cause, out of which, for example, arises the morbid anxiety concerning any particular period of our life. Such an objectless excitement as this can be subdued only by strength of will. The emotions, on the contrary, which arise only on rare occasions, and then with great depth and strength, are no hindrance to the calmest and coolest deliberation, but rather increase the power. I have always found that the women who had the strongest and most lively feelings in love and friendship were capable of the calmest reflection, the greatest thoughtfulness, and the firmest self-control. I am myself perhaps now more subject to excited feelings, but I should depend upon the correctness of my calm deliberation as much as ever.

February 8, 1831.

I am sorry that I have forgotten to send you a report of my health. It is because I seldom think of it; but you must not suppose that I am careless of it. My mode of life is so uniform that it must promote health. Some simple medicines that I have found beneficial for several years I take regularly;—but this is all the care I take. The necessity of bearing illness certainly gives strength, and I trust that I should not be found wanting. But the elasticity of mind arising from tolerable health is an inestimable blessing. I cannot say that I am weary of life, or that I desire death. All that I can say with truth is, that in my present frame of mind, death would bear a very friendly aspect, whereas I formerly looked upon it as an unavoidable evil. I do not desire anything from life; but if a very old age be appointed for me, I shall never be ungrateful to the light and air and the conditions on which thought and feeling depend. I have become so far independent of mankind through the ordination of Providence, that my joys, my happiness, my very being, flow only from the past—from a spiritual presence, and from ideas beyond time and space. These I bear within me; upon these I live, and I desire nothing beyond. If I must provide for my external wants, I should certainly not shrink from the work, and should not wish to live a shorter time merely because a more restless and less agreeable life awaited me. He who looks at the position of affairs at present (1831) with only half an eye, must be aware of the uncertainty of the future. I am now able to meet my important expenses; but it may be otherwise in a short time. This consideration, however, gives me no concern, and if any difficulty were to occur, though it might give me more work, would yet create no anxiety. My health must be maintained by this peaceful view of external circumstances. I therefore allude to it, since you take so much interest in me, that you may have no

reason to be uneasy about me. I have really nothing to complain of in respect to my health. On two points only I might be better, and these rather get worse,—not from illness, but from age. You will perceive, dear Charlotte, that I allude to my sight and to the trembling of my hand. In one eye I have, as you know, a cataract, which in time may bear an operation; but in the other, with which alone I now read and write, I suffer only from a weakness that dulls the power of vision. In this eye there is neither inflammation nor incipient cataract, but merely an organic defect. Though I write very little myself, I can observe that the weakness increases. It is remarkable that bright daylight does not facilitate my power of sight, nor does a moderate artificial light make it more difficult. The defect in my hand is really rather ludicrous. My writing consists of a constant effort to make large letters, and the result is, as you see, very small ones. My hand does not ache or tremble, but it refuses to obey my will. This arises from the nerves. The small but distinct movements required for clear handwriting demand more strength, and exhaust the nerves more than rough and heavy work. If I had not been aware of the necessity of making each stroke distinctly in order to give any degree of clearness to small, short letters, in a short time my writing would have been quite illegible. I do not know whether you find the weakness in my hand increase. But I remark it myself, from an unmistakeable sign: I find it more difficult to write legibly, and it takes more time. The trouble I would willingly bestow, but the time is too valuable. I write very little now, and if the difficulty increases, I shall give up writing altogether, and merely dictate. I have been accustomed to dictation, and one has seldom real secrets to write. But we give up unwillingly what we have long been accustomed to do, and before I entirely leave off writing, I shall lessen the quantity still further. This certainly, of all bodily infirmities, is the most to be deprecated by one occupied

as I am. But such external circumstances do not put me out of humour. I have never been either irritable or melancholy about it.

I thank you very much for reminding me of that song of Gellert's which you mention as a favourite of yours. At an early period of my life I liked the worthy Gellert in spite of his entire want of all poetry, of which Nature had not bestowed a spark upon him. I have not seen the work for fifty years, and I never had it in my possession. I do not recollect the passage you quote, but no doubt you remember another song, entitled, I think, "Evening Meditations." It begins thus, or this passage occurs in it:—"A day is gone, and how have I wasted this portion of time and consumed it in vain!" How often do such words occur to us on going to rest! But we do not really differ about the passage which you quote. Gellert has very reasonably united the two feelings, and you have not exactly taken account of the distinction. You would not certainly expect the sanctification without doing anything,—I should as little presume to effect it without the blessing of God. But it lies really in this:—We should not merely act, but act with confidence, as the issue depends entirely upon ourselves. At first sight there appears to be a contradiction in striving after an effect as dependent upon ourselves, which we know lies in another hand. But the solution appears to me to present itself, if we unite the eagerness and fervour of the endeavour with the humble conviction of our own insufficiency; and in proportion as this effort and this humility are united, the issue is secured. The verses of Gellert contain a warning against two deviations from the right path:—We should not expect the sanctification and the peace thence arising as a gift, which, without any act of his own, God will pour into the heart of man; and on the other hand, we should not consider ourselves as alone sufficient to attain it, for by this, what is a heavenly and spiritual gift would become an earthly, human, attainable one.

You say that you lose your cheerfulness without feeling discontented. I can easily believe this, but it gives me pain to know it. Cheerfulness is the sunny ray of life. It is the *constant* portion of none, and the word itself comprehends a multitude of degrees and modifications. The sum of all is this,—that man, out of inward and outward circumstances, forms himself and the track on which his life glides on. This is a benevolent ordination of Providence, for no struggle after harmony and elevation is ever without effect.

The passage in my letter in which you thought I alluded darkly to something disquieting, had really no reference of the kind. It was merely the natural expression of the frame of mind induced by the changes and vicissitudes I have experienced.

I hope the weakness in your eyes is merely temporary, and I am glad to see by your handwriting that it is already better. Write to me no oftener than you can do without effort. I shall be glad if you can send your next letter on the 22d of March.

With heartfelt sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXIV.

TEGEL, April 6, 1831.

This time, dear Charlotte, I have received no letter from you since my last, and have consequently none before me to answer. Your silence cannot have arisen from the state of your eyes, for you would then have written a few lines only, and if you had been ill, you would certainly have sent me word. The most natural conjecture appears to be that you fear to write to me during the week of the anniversary of my loss, when I am always depressed. I thank you from my heart for this delicacy, but your letter would have given me equal pleasure as at any other time. We do not honour the dead by withdrawing our sympathy from the living, or avoiding occasions of being useful to them, and least of all would this be a proper tribute to the memory of her whom I mourn. But the emotion in you is so natural and delicate, and expresses so fully your feelings and sentiments, that it has touched me very deeply.

During the whole of March I spent only one day at Berlin,—and, partly alone and partly with my children, I enjoyed here a very enviable state of repose. The weather was seldom unfavourable,—never such as to prevent my going out every day. The spring has now burst forth in all her beauty, and I suppose you are enjoying the youthful awakening of nature in your garden. I do not know whether you have observed what I have remarked in very different climates,—in Spain and Italy, for instance,—that when the day has been rainy, the sky is clear again in the evening; the rain generally leaving off about half-an-hour before the sun sets. This is the usual time when I take my walk. The masses of clouds are then more magnificent and more richly

tinted, and from my childhood they have always added greatly to my enjoyment of nature. If we reflect upon it, it is difficult to say wherein the charm consists. Certainly it is not merely the blended colouring, however rich and beautiful that may be. The various appearances of the heavens affect the soul more deeply and powerfully than any charm of earth. The emotion comes from Heaven, and rises to Heaven again. Melancholy at all times, and yet in the highest degree fascinating, is the gradual fading of the colours, the dying of the splendour, which at length, just before it gives place to darkness, becomes of a pale greenish hue. My thoughts at such times always dwell upon themes of importance. In all reveries of this sort, but especially in high and exalted ones, there is a multitude of thoughts that never become practical, and are only known to him who entertained them, and are for ever locked up in his own bosom. Joy and sorrow, happiness and misery, however, arise from them oftener than from spoken and acted thoughts. Their flowing in and out of the mind, the emotions which they excite, very much resemble the many-coloured glowing appearances of the heavens. With respect to the earnestness of the outer life, they are but airy cloud-images, not affecting it. They disappear like these, and leave in the soul a blank, which resembles the grey of the twilight and the darkness of night. But are they therefore gone? Can that which so exalted the mind, and shook it to its inmost foundation, have quite perished? Then might man himself be but a passing cloud. You will reply, that in this as in every case, that which has once been in the mind reacts upon the spirit and character, and in this reaction lives. But this is not enough. Out of these emotions of the soul, something determinate must proceed. These thoughts occupy me chiefly when I look at the heavens in the evening before and after a storm. But I have a firm conviction, though I may not perhaps be able to prove it, that every thought which has ever

been in the mind, again shines forth and exerts an influence, more or less evident, upon both speech and action. Man has only to keep himself worthy of them,—to be neither too cool and calculating on the one hand, nor, on the other, too enthusiastic and theoretical, but above all things to be independent, to possess the strength to control self, and to prefer the inward progress of thought to all outward enjoyment and excitement.

In looking back at what I have written, I see that I must beg your forgiveness, dear Charlotte, for sending you such commonplace ideas and reflections. But I live in such, together with the thoughts of the past which can never return to me. Such ideas are connected also with my scientific pursuits; and so you have the whole circle in which I live when I can be alone, and out of which I go but as a part of myself, when duty or voluntary care for others draws me out. This feeling has increased upon me without my having intentionally encouraged it. I should not struggle against a change of sentiment if it were suddenly to occur. If I felt that I again derived pleasure from things which gave me enjoyment before this blow—that I mingled voluntarily in the world again—that I was capable of other pleasures than those which I create for myself out of the past,—I should freely give myself up to these sensations, even if I were obliged to acknowledge that the change was not such as to meet my impartial approval. I never think whether my present tone of mind will accompany me to the end of my days, or whether time, as many assert (in my opinion wrongly), will change or blunt my feelings. I am opposed not only to all affectation, but also to all premeditation. Can the feeling which I have had ever since I formed the connection,—viz. that there is an inward union between individuals, the loosening of which deprives the survivor of all activity and all inclination to receive happiness from any other source,—can, I say, this feeling fade away, or become extinct? In the dominion of feeling, nothing can

exist longer than it has inward strength to live. This emotion has increased in strength, and I am indebted to it for all that I have enjoyed of inward power, of peace and real cheerfulness, since that painful separation;—and this no individual on earth, not even my children, could have given to me without the possession of this feeling. I perceive its beneficial influence in the greater clearness and decision of my mental powers, and if I am now less capable than formerly of entering into active employments, I feel decidedly that my ideas have become in every respect more luminous.

I fix no day for you to write, as it is always my desire and request that you will write as soon as you can. With unchangeable sympathy and friendship, yours, H.

LETTER XXV.

TEGEL, May 6, 1831.

Immediately after I had sent my last letter to you, dear Charlotte, I received yours, and found that I had judged rightly respecting the reason of your silence. I soon received your second letter also, and I am glad to find from both that the weakness in your eyes, though not quite removed, yet gives you no uneasiness, and is more a nervous affection than a real disease. Above all things use your eyes as little as possible. Unfortunately the nature of your employment allows of no complete rest, and all you can do is to spare yourself as much as is at all practicable;—remember that my happiness is affected by yours. I always feared that this would be the consequence of your excessive exertions last winter. I also give you a piece of advice derived from my own experience,—viz. to limit your reading and writing as much as possible.

You mention the recent public events, and say that a country residence is not very desirable for me, with the prospect of war, and armies marching in our neighbourhood. It is true, no one can escape having troops quartered upon them, and this is a very oppressive burden. I trust, however, that peace will be preserved. Do you also maintain this hope, and do not lose courage. The dread you entertain of the outbreak of the Polish revolution I think quite natural, and I agree with you in your warm sympathy for that unhappy people. You add modestly, that you are not sufficiently informed to express a judgment respecting the merits of the case, and that you wish to hear mine. Unspeakable misery must be the consequence of the Polish revolution, from the tumultuous and warlike spirit of the

nation. The first outbreak was that of a young and thoughtless people. Certainly the partition of Poland was an injustice, but the kingdom was itself in so tottering a state as to hasten the event. Without this internal weakness, no foreign power would ever have entertained a thought of the partition. It is only in accordance with your wish that I have written a few words respecting the passing events of the times, but the subject lies beyond the plan and spirit of our correspondence.

* * * * * *

I have long wished to ask you, dear Charlotte, whether you have read Schiller's "Life of Madame von Wolzogen." Her merits as a writer cannot be unknown to you. If you have not yet read the book, I advise you to do it soon. I do not think there is another work so beautifully written, so full of thought, and so deeply and delicately conceived. A man could not write in such a manner unless he were preëminent in qualities of both head and heart. I know nothing resembling it in all the memoirs of women that I have met with. There are also some exquisite letters of Schiller's in the work. The book will give you great pleasure. Lay aside Ritter's "Description of the Earth" until your eyes are quite well: the book is badly printed; and reading that, together with the frequent consulting of the maps, does not suit weak eyes.

"What is Poetry?" you ask; and you add—"I think it must be felt." I am quite of your opinion. He who feels strongly (and thus only it can be felt) that something is poetical, does not require any explanation; and he who has no feeling about it, cannot be assisted by any words of description. As far as it is possible, this has been done by Schiller, who more than any other possessed the power of clothing in words what struggled in his own nature for utterance. Examples will explain. Let us take two contemporary poets whom you know well,—Gellert and Klopstock. They resemble each other, because they both treated

of spiritual subjects, because both were inspired by a noble devotion and pure love of virtue, and because they have each produced a deep effect upon the minds and hearts of their age. But you are no doubt of my opinion that Klopstock soared higher, had more matter for thought in his words, and transports you more completely along with him. Gellert's verse is prose in rhyme; Klopstock had a genuine poetical nature.

Will you send your next letter on the 24th? Fare you well.—With earnest sympathy and friendship, yours,

H.

LETTER XXVI.

TEGEL, June 3, 1831.

Your letter, written from the 22d to the 25th of last month, arrived so late, that I was beginning to wonder at its delay. I could not conjecture the cause of your silence this time. Yet I had no fear of illness, dear Charlotte, because I relied upon your sending me a few lines if that had been the case. So much the more, then, I rejoiced to receive so long a letter. When I say this, I only mean that I am always glad to read your observations on any subject; and everything that concerns you, be it joyful or the reverse, claims and receives my earnest sympathy. But I could only be painfully affected by what you tell me of your recent loss, and the state of mind the sad event has induced in you. Without knowing the family, the death of this young person has something in it peculiarly affecting. It is evidently the consequence of the death of her sister, and of her having, from her love for the departed one, assumed the onerous duties of the household and the care of the children. Every circumstance combines to increase one's sorrow for the event. You say that so early a death is enviable, for it cuts off a pure, fresh, and beautiful flower, before the rude north wind has blighted it; and you allude to it again in another part of your letter. I well remember experiencing a similar feeling many years since upon the death of my eldest son, a boy of ten years of age. He died at Rome, where he was buried in a beautiful spot now overshadowed by trees. He was a remarkably handsome, intelligent, and amiable child, and passed from full health and vigour to sudden and fatal illness. I acknowledge the truth of the feeling: but life has its value, even if its joys

be few. The powers are strengthened and the mind is matured, and there can be no doubt that the degree of inward perfection to which a man attains is the fact of the greatest importance to him; and to this even the rudest storms of life contribute. All these reflections, however, are consoling and comforting only in a certain point of view. The loss of the beloved ones remains irreparable, and, as I know and feel, no reflections can alleviate the grief; but upon many minds the peaceful course of events exercises a soothing influence. I can understand that this unexpected loss must be much more painful to you from your living so much alone. If the sincerity and warmth of my sympathy can in any way contribute to the alleviation of your distress, you may securely calculate upon it. You know my sentiments towards you; you know they have been full of kindly sympathy from the first moment when we resumed our acquaintance after a long course of years, although I knew nothing of you during the long interval, and our youthful acquaintance was of but a few days duration. This devoted sympathy will still be yours from the pure desire to be useful to you, to exercise an influence over the tone of your mind and your life, and you may be certain that in every emergency it will be always ready. The more I live in myself, the more I shrink from external impressions, and the more decidedly I have declined, without any consideration, all society but that of my children, so much the more frank, pure, and unquestioning is my sympathy with those who receive it kindly, and to whom I know that it gives pleasure. I see and feel the vicissitudes of life more in others than in myself. I am peaceful, and though frequently melancholy from dwelling on the past, yet sometimes I am cheerful. My friends and relations, who know this, indulge me, and do not disturb my seclusion; but my interest in them and their fate is equally strong.

I have only good news to send you respecting my health. I can complain of no illness, only of the infirmities which

you have long known of. You praise the greater firmness of my handwriting, dear Charlotte, and rejoice at it. Your opinion has the more weight with me, as you were the first to notice its weakness and unsteadiness. When you first remarked it, its progress had been so slow that I was not aware of it, but I soon perceived that your observation was correct. I have used some remedies since the winter, with a view to relieve the stiffness of the joints and the weakness of the hand. It has certainly benefited the former, perhaps also the latter, but I think not much. The improvement you notice is probably owing to my now writing, as children do, on lines, which keep the strokes and the hand more even. My physician concludes, from the effect of the prescribed means, that the cause of the weakness is in the spine, and advises the use of strong salt-water baths. I shall go therefore this summer to Nordernei instead of to Gastein. You know that this is an island which lies opposite to the town of Aurich in East Friesland. My eldest daughter will accompany me, and I shall pay a visit to one of my estates at the same time. Do not send your next letter here, but to the under-mentioned address. I wish you may be able to contrive that it shall reach me during the last week of this month.

You need not be anxious on my account respecting the illness prevalent in Berlin, nor regarding the cholera now approaching us. I have no tendency to complaints of that sort.

I am much gratified by your wish to have my approval before you decide upon your journey to O. What objection could I make to it? I should be glad if the change in your residence confirms your present cheerfulness. But I should ask time to consider whether your happiness is likely to be increased by a deviation for a length of time from your customary arrangements. You live in a pretty house, and have a pleasant garden :—I have seen both, and remember them well. You enjoy all the comfort of perfect

freedom, and value the privilege rightly. Even with the most valued friend, one must be less free than in solitude. But you must, after all, be the best judge of your own feelings. Reason and religion will, I know, guide your determination;—the words of another can have power only through these. Farewell.—With deepest sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER XXVII.

ASCHERSLEBEN, July 2, 1831.

I thank you very much, dear Charlotte, for your letter, and also for your punctuality. You have given me great pleasure by it, for otherwise I should have been a long time without tidings of you, as I remained only a day and a half with Councillor M.

I see from your letter that you have given up your journey, and I cannot but approve of the change of plan. So long as we are fixed and regular in our household habits, we feel a certain monotony about them, which makes us enjoy the prospect of a journey; but when the time comes to set out, we feel all the difficulties and discomforts which do not appear at home, and first learn to appreciate the value of the ordinary existence which daily surrounds us. I should have had some difficulty in determining upon my summer journey this year, and should hardly indeed have undertaken it, had I not believed that, without it, the weakness from which I suffer would increase so far as to impede my activity. I feel no interest in the journey. I shall be very glad to see some friends again in the towns through which I shall pass; but this does not make up for the discomforts, and especially for the loss of time,—and to this must be added the uncertainty of the times.*

You write that you are more isolated from the world just now by a joyful occurrence, and you tell me of the marriage and consequent departure of some young friends of yours whom you loved like daughters, and whom you have

* At this period the dreaded cholera appeared throughout Germany, and, as is well known, alarmed all the inhabitants.

every reason to suppose have a probability of happiness from what you know of their circumstances before their marriage and of their prospects at present. So wonderful are the events of life, as they form and dissolve ties between individuals of very different ages, as if fate did not care how soon friends may be separated by natural events. There is, however, something very beneficial in the sympathies which arise between the old and young, for no man can say with justice that his generation has left him alone; no man loses by death the whole of his friends and acquaintances; and the place of those who are gone will be supplied by others, although they may not be equally congenial. So, dear Charlotte, has your circle renewed itself, and it will continue to do so. I know not by what singular chain of ideas I have just been reminded of St ——, whom you knew at Göttingen and liked so much. Do you know that he lives in London, upon the income of an Irish benefice? The duties of his office, as is customary there, are performed by another. I think I have also heard that he is married. Have you heard anything of him lately?

You speak in your letter of the value of life, and say that the diminished powers of old age lessen it. If you refer to the capacity for happiness, I willingly concede that it cannot be rated very highly. I even admit, that all as far advanced in life as myself have little or nothing joyful to expect, for in all that concerns human life, the views become gloomy, the ideas are confused, and I cannot look for any greater clearness during the remaining years I have to live. But is it right to estimate the value of life like any other possession? Life is the gift of God to man, that he may apply it to the performance of his appointed work, and in this application may find enjoyment. It is given to us for happiness. The tendencies are towards happiness, and it is found in the conscientious performance of our duty, although each day may bring its trials. I never ask myself what value life has yet for me;—I seek to employ it, and

leave the rest to Providence. I know from my own experience the weakening of the powers in old age; but I cannot retract what I lately wrote to you,—that the real aim of life is to advance to the highest inward spiritual worth of the individual,—and this every circumstance, and the duration of life itself, may promote. There are cases in which old age destroys all the powers of mind. It was so with Campe, who merely vegetated during the last five years of his life, when his state could hardly be called second *childhood*, as it possessed none of the interest and promise of that period. There is nothing to be said of such cases, as the man ceases to be human before he dies physically. But they are fortunately rare. The usual infirmities of old age are those of the body, and the spirit retains its strength of determination, its decision, its perseverance, its memory, and its liveliness of interest in external events. The power of self-examination is not only unimpaired in most cases, but clearer and less disturbed by the mingling of emotions. Those powers are the most important which lead to maturity of knowledge. In old age, which seeks not for fortunate results or change of circumstances, these weigh most justly the true value of things and actions, and connect the close of the earthly being with the hope of a higher: they purify the soul by a calm unbiassed examination of the past events of life. No one, however, must believe himself already prepared by means of this quiet self-occupation. The more perseveringly the work is undertaken, the more new material is developed. I do not mean an unproductive brooding over one's self,—this thought may carry us far back into past times and history;—nor do I mean to urge the deriving material from the earthly sphere, but from the higher, to which man especially in his later years belongs. For this two-fold sphere is clearly pointed out to man. In the one he acts, he is busy, he contributes more or less to the well-being of others, but he never sees the end, and he is not the object of it: he is only an instrument, only a link in the

chain;—this link often breaks at a decisive moment for himself, but the whole runs on. In the other sphere, man looks upon the things of this life, not as the ultimate object, but as of importance only from the ideas they give rise to, and these views raise him from the narrowing influences of earth. This sphere is appointed to the individual—to each man for himself. The merely earthly nature of man is restless. Every man, if he pays attention to himself, revolves in both these circles; but the higher and more noble is more peculiar to old age, and not without reason do the infirmities of advanced life affect a man; for, calmed and softened by their influence, he devotes himself more to the loftiest contemplations.

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I must request you to send your letter on the 20th of July, and to address it "Nordernei by Aurich." I began this letter at the residence of one of my tenants, and close it the 6th of July in Zelle. My journey has been without adventures, which was to be expected, as it was so short a one. With unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXVIII.

NORDERNEI, July 26, 1831.

It occurs to me as something singular, dear Charlotte, after having written to you so many summers from the mountains of Gastein, to do so now from the low downs and flat shores of the Northern Sea. It will interest you to have an idea of sea-bathing, and of the neighbourhood in which I am. But first you will wish to hear of my health. Up to this time I can give you a very favourable account; and as I have to-day taken my fourteenth bath, I hope that my health will continue good, although it is difficult to judge until I have gone through the whole of what has been prescribed. But I experience a general feeling of life and vigour, a clearness of thought, and a lightness in every limb, especially immediately after I have bathed. Other and more important benefits I hope to derive, but my expectations are very moderate. I shall be quite satisfied if the weakness for which my physician recommended sea-bathing does not increase next year: I am not so infatuated or unreasonable as to look for a perfect cure. In old age we must be prepared for some inevitable infirmities. The human organization and the transient nature of all the things of time forbid any other expectation; and my infirmities are so bearable compared with those of many others, that it would be doubly inexcusable in me to be impatient.

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The air here, even with the hottest sun, is cooled by the fresh sea-breeze, which now gently curls the surface of the water, and anon lashes it into high waves. It is the view of the sea which gives my residence here its greatest charm. I generally go to the beach more than once a-day in addi-

tion to my bathing time, and often remain there for hours. Uniform as is the motion of the waves, it is for ever fascinating. One cannot express the charm in words, but the emotion is not the less felt. Much depends upon the idea of immensity—the thought of the connexion of the very sea on whose shores you stand, with that which washes the remotest coast. The dark unfathomable depth adds to the effect;—and not merely the depth, but the incomprehensibleness of this wild, immeasurable mass of air and water, the reason and the aim of whose motion and rest are unknown to man, and which yet bends to eternal laws, and never oversteps its prescribed limits, for even the roughest waves of the sea run foaming upon the flat shore in playful arch-like streams.

It is a pity that there is no view of the sea except from the garret-windows. The whole island is encircled by barren sand-hills, which must be climbed over before the shore is reached. At ebb-tide the ground is as firm as a floor, and more elastic. At flood-tide there is deep sand between the beach and the downs, and where this tract is very broad it makes the island like an oasis in an African desert. There is a brook of fresh water, partly dug and partly from a natural spring, but the water is not particularly good. In the centre, shut in by the downs, are some green meadows where cattle pasture. There are no lofty trees, the stormy winds preventing their growth, but there are copses, which are very pretty, and form pleasant walks, sheltered from the sun and wind. There is only one village in the island, but that is a considerable one. In this the visitors reside, in small but very clean houses. The habits of the people are a mixture of Dutch and English. The pleasant appearance from without, and the cheerfulness within, of these fishermen's and sailors' houses (for these are the principal inhabitants), are greatly owing to the large windows, with strong wooden bars, which are much better glazed than is usually the case in larger towns. One house belongs to the bathing estab-

lishment: I live in it, but it is very small, and not much superior to the dwellings of the inhabitants of the village. There are a good many visitors, although this year the fear of the cholera has kept many away from the east and north coasts. There is a building for the guests to assemble in, with saloons for cards and conversation. I take my meals in my own apartment; but I have been into all the public rooms. There are a few persons here with whom I associate occasionally. What makes the residence here and at other places at the coast more agreeable than at the spas in the interior, is the circumstance that there are not so many here who come on account of serious illness, and we do not see so many cripples. Sea-bathing is not suitable for such complaints, as a certain degree of strength is necessary in those who employ it. I see only one man here who walks on crutches, and he is taken to the beach in a sedan chair, as the distance from the village is considerable. I think, from this detailed description, you will be able to form a pretty correct idea of my present residence.

I have received no letter from you yet, but I expect it to-morrow, which is the day for the arrival of the mail. In the mean time I must send this away, as the letters are occasionally delayed a long time.

With heartfelt sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXIX.

TEGEL, Jan. 1, 1832.

I have at length received tidings of you, dear Charlotte, from your letter of December 16th. As I expected it sooner, I was surprised at the delay, but I was not uneasy, as I supposed it was caused by some accidental hindrance. I certainly never imagined you would have attached such a meaning to my words. It is really quite an unfounded timidity that makes you wish me always to fix the day for you to write. Your letters are always welcome.

I continue very well, and have even less weakness to complain of than usual. The sea-bathing has done me much good; but my handwriting is slow and bad, and the dullness of my sight increases.

You rejoice that I look more cheerfully upon life again, and as you take such an affectionate interest in me, you will also rejoice in my greater strength. As to my more cheerful view of life, it is a peculiar thing: it is true, and yet not true. I have never turned away from life: to do this would be against my principles; for as long as a man lives, he ought to seek to preserve his life,—not to estrange himself from it, but to exert himself in it as far as strength and opportunity permit. To live is a duty which man must fulfil. He is certainly placed in the world in order to be happy; but the well-disposed man finds his highest happiness in the fulfilment of duty, and the wise man does not lament if he is not in a situation to obtain any other sort of enjoyment. But in another sense I have not returned to my interest in life. The change which the feeling of greater strength has produced in me is, that it has induced me, since I find that I possess the power, to execute my various plans, remembering the uncertainty of the time

yet remaining to me. The consequence has also been that I am more economical of my time, and since my return from Nordernei I have been still more alone, and more occupied about myself, and yet more indifferent in reference to myself. I cannot again attain cheerfulness for the present moment, because something is wanting for which I have received no substitute: but reflections upon the past give me real and calm cheerfulness. To estimate life justly in its sweet and bitter moments, and to oppose to its outward influences our own deepest and most secret feelings, I have termed a duty; but it is certain that not to do so would likewise be unreasonable. The being of man certainly extends beyond the grave, and is naturally connected together in its various periods. It is therefore a duty to seize and employ the present, in order the better to prepare for the future. The world is a place of trial and improvement, a step to higher and better things—where man must gain the strength which will enable him to grasp the infinite; for the bliss of heaven can be no mere gift—it must be won, and only a thoroughly tried soul can be partaker in it.

It has grieved me very much to find that the close of the year has been saddened to you by recent deaths, and the more so since you appeared to be regaining your cheerfulness. The course of time rolls on in its ceaseless round, regardless of individual interests. I have this year lost three friends, one older and two younger than myself; but the feeling that these deaths were in the natural order of events has not softened or checked my sorrow. The full heart asks itself, since so many live on, why the departed ones must go?

What you say of your first preceptress has touched and pleased me.* Every well-disposed mind, to say nothing of

* It was for her I was lamenting. However little interest the event might have for him, every word that flowed from his pen was consoling.

one of acute and delicate feelings, preserves through life a willing sense of gratitude towards one who has guarded its childhood. This feeling has been truly and beautifully described by the ancients. The care of childhood requires patience, love, and self-sacrifice, and to see long years devoted to the work touches the tenderest and most delicate chords of the heart. This feeling must exist in all; the difference consists in the fervour of the emotion. The proportion of gratitude is according to the degree of love put into the work. Many who have charge of children do their duty; but if the heart is not there, the child remarks it. I am sure this spirit of love was what you valued in your deceased friend. May the new year bring you peace and joy, guard you from losses in your already narrow circle, and pour into your soul the friendly light which, whilst looking upon this life but as a path to a higher, will yet make the way a pleasant one!

Keep me in affectionate remembrance, for my earnest and sincere sympathy is ever with you. Do not be uneasy about me; I am happy in my present mode of life. As long as I can retain my solitude, and my daily quiet walk, no circumstance of life can bring me uneasiness, unless it disturb my mental repose.—Fare you well. Yours,

H.

LETTER XXX.

TEGEL, Feb. 2, 1832.

The cheerful tone of your kind letter of the 12th of January has given me great pleasure, and I thank you, dear Charlotte, sincerely and heartily for it. This letter arrived some time since, but not the other which you mention. You intended to write it a week later;—if you had done so, I should have received it by this time.

I always take the greatest interest in your health and the state of your mind, and consequently the greater cheerfulness that I perceive in your letter has been a source of very great pleasure to me. But I rejoice still more at the thought that you owe this greater composure, which you yourself acknowledge, to the influence I exercise over you, and to the effect of my letters. I shall be glad if they always exercise such a power. If it be so—and I cannot doubt your assurance—it must arise from the feeling of confidence engendered by the simple nature of my words, which are always the language of my heart. This is the case with all my exhortation, advice, and consolation. The most successful advice and admonition are given personally, as the effect depends very much upon the tone and the accompanying expression. For it all comes to this:—the whole influence one man has over another communicates itself to what he says, and the same words in the mouth of a different person have not the same effect. You must ascribe it also to the affection you cherish for me, that my words make an impression upon your mind. But it is a great pleasure to me to think that the comfort and encouragement I offer to you are of a kind suited to your disposition. A natural inclination led me early in life to endeavour

to go deeply into the character of every individual, in order to enter as much as possible into their manner of thinking, feeling, and acting:—what you say is a new proof that my efforts in this respect have not been unsuccessful. But it is not enough to know the opinions of men; we must also understand how to determine with perfect impartiality the relation of these opinions to their higher natures—to their individuality,—and according to that to direct the aim of each. We must thus endeavour not merely to make ourselves intelligible to every individual, but to touch the most responsive chords in his being. But in this way we never give up nor deny our own nature, nor do we consider as worthy of applause that only which is unusual and remarkable. We always act most efficiently where peculiarities are least striking, sharp contrasts smoothed away, and only points of agreement remain. It is a most important object in life not to be wrapt up in self, but to enter as much as possible into the various modes of feeling of those around us. In this way only can we judge and estimate men according to their views and not according to our own. It is by this that we preserve respect even for the apparent contradictions in the conduct of others, and never seek to offer violence to their mental freedom. There is really no employment more congenial both to mind and heart, than the thorough study of character in its various shades. It signifies little though the characters be not strongly marked ones. There is always a nature to fathom, upon which our judgment must be founded. But above all, this study of character affords us means and opportunities of being more useful to those with whom we are in the closest connexion.

I was very much struck with what you say respecting the expressions used by some people concerning death. The consideration that it is well with the departed one, is often brought forward to conceal the indifference of the survivor; for however strongly this indifference exists, it is never openly avowed. But in many cases we cannot but lament

that the one who has left us has been taken away so suddenly. We think that a young person might have been longer spared,—that a mother might have been suffered to remain with her children,—and so in many other cases. But there is no *too early* or *too late* in respect to the condition in the future world: the short span of life here is as nothing compared with eternity. The sorrow which fills the heart on the death of one whom we have loved and cherished, is a feeling intimately connected with many other sentiments. The survivor mourns for himself, it is true;—but his own loss is not his sole thought. If the deceased were distinguished for virtue and talent, we lament that the world has lost such a man;—everything wears another and more gloomy colouring, from the thought that he is gone who shed a charm over life. It is not merely the feeling that the departed one made us happy—that we derived this or that joy from him: it is the change our whole being has experienced as we now pursue our way alone. For a deeply-feeling heart it is a melancholy consideration also that so close a tie could be severed without so far loosening the chords of life that the survivor quickly followed the one he had lost. I believe that this feeling exists in great strength in but few, nor are there many cases in which it would be consistent. Even in the case of the death of those who have been in no way remarkable, but merely good and harmless individuals, who appear scarcely to leave a blank in their circle when they go, there is excited in a sensitive mind a feeling of sorrow not easily forgotten. Life has its evident claims, and no emotions are more natural than the wish to remain if possible with those whom we love and cherish, and the inconsolable grief felt when these ties are severed. Great calmness at the death of beloved friends, if it does not arise from want of feeling, may be owing to Christian resignation; but the unnatural joy that they are gone to heaven always shows an overstrained hypocritical spirit, with which I never could sympathise.

I rejoice at the good news of your improved health. Take plenty of exercise. This remarkably mild winter invites it particularly;—I do not remember one like it. There is no snow left here, but it is singular that the lake, which is more than a mile in circumference, and in which I possess five islands, is still frozen. The nearest town is Spandau, which lies on the opposite side of the lake. Every day a number of skaters come to amuse themselves, and ladies in sledges are pushed along on the ice by the skaters. This takes place every year; but nearly each winter some accident occurs during the passage across after a thaw which leaves some parts not strong enough to bear the weight of the sledge. But these warnings do not seem to deter others.

My health is very good;—I have scarcely had a cold this winter; but I take a great deal of exercise, and that is a very good preventive of colds.

I have been interrupted whilst writing this letter, and finish it to-day, February 6. Farewell.—With deep sympathy and friendship, yours, H.

LETTER XXXI.

TEGEL, 7th March 1832.

I have two kind letters from you before me to answer, and I begin my reply to your last respecting the duel. I received the first intelligence of it from you, as I read the papers very irregularly, and often do not see one for a month or six weeks. This will appear incredible to you, but so called great events have been so rare for some years, that it has been of little importance to me to hear of them early, or even at all. That sad history must have been related during some of these times of non-reading. I have not been able to learn whether it was the same St. —— in whom you took an interest, and who was once here. One may, however, suppose it was, as he did not avoid or guard against such adventures; but I will endeavour to obtain correct information for you. I knew little of him, but he was liked here in spite of many peculiarities, and I now hear that this uncertain intelligence excited a great deal of sympathy.

Duelling is a strange thing. Many duels—and perhaps this may have been the case with those in which St. —— was engaged—are merely youthful follies. But the case is different with others: they are a necessary evil, and they may even be considered as a noble means of healing an otherwise incurable dissension. Some people cherish hostile and revengeful feelings for years: the duel, which is not always dangerous, and often quite bloodless, brings a reconciliation, and puts an end to all resentment.

You have not alluded to your astronomical studies for a long time, dear Charlotte, but you surely have not neglected them. I have never seen the stars more beautiful than

they have been this year. The region about Orion is most fascinating. Two beautiful evenings I have continued my walk until the stars were quite out, and have enjoyed the sight very much. I always take my walks about the time of sunset;—it is so delightful to see the gradual advance of the twilight. Night has in some respects charms superior to those of day: a stormy night is more sublime, and a calm one induces deeper and more earnest feeling.

The smaller stars now escape my sight, and one can hardly obtain a correct idea of the firmament without them. In winter it is certainly better to go out at noon, as it is warmer; but I never do so, or only when some visitor asks me to walk with him at that time, which I do not like. It is, however, an escape from a tiresome visit in the country to spend the time in the open air. Tedious common-places die away on the air, and one can indulge in absence of mind whilst lending only half an ear.

The reflections which your letter of the 1st February contains respecting the past year and its results to yourself, have pleased and interested me very much. I should be glad if you could recal them to your mind. But if you have any reason for not entering further into them, leave my questions unanswered: I would extort no confession from you that might awaken painful feelings. Every one requires an earnest examination of his own heart. We must determine to do the work thoroughly, and there is no subject that we can at all times review so justly and completely, as we have only our own souls to look into. We may certainly deceive ourselves, and excuse weaknesses, or from another error of vanity exaggerate the sinfulness of our faults. Certainly the review has its difficulties from our being ourselves the subjects of it; but if with perfect simplicity of heart and with pure sincerity of purpose we undertake the examination in order to stand justified before ourselves and our consciences, there is no danger to fear. Every one must form for himself a lively representation of

his own internal feelings: this is to a certain extent the point on which all else depends. By this self-examination we not only regain strength with respect to duty and morality, but review our inward being in its whole extent and from all sides. It is certainly too limited an idea to summon ourselves, as it were, before a tribunal, and question ourselves about guilt and innocence. The perfection of his whole being, the possible elevation of every sentiment, the greatest enlargement of mental energy, as well as the purity of his actions, are the problems that man has to solve. There are also in morals things which cannot be brought under the consideration of the performance or omission of duty, but demand a higher test. There is a moral beauty, which, like the corporeal beauty of the countenance, demands a blending of thought and feeling, a spontaneous connection of itself to a spiritual oneness, which plainly shows that from the inmost nature of every individual arises a struggling effort after a heavenly consummation, and that an image of endless greatness, goodness, and beauty, which can never be attained, floats before the soul, which, inspired by a nobler ambition, becomes worthy of the translation to a higher being. The development of intellectual faculties to a certain extent belongs also to our general improvement. I am quite of your opinion that much knowledge and information derived from books are not essential; but it is manifestly a duty, and the proper effort of a man not entirely devoted to this world with all its confusion and folly, to attain to as high a degree of clearness and precision as possible in the range of ideas which he possesses, and to be satisfied with nothing that has not been thoroughly proved. This may be called the true *thought* of man. All else is but the *material*, which has no absolute value in itself, but only in its bearing upon thought. Man must learn to extend and improve his range of thought;—and knowledge and reflection should go hand in hand, otherwise knowledge remains dead and unfruitful. In some men this occurs so

frequently, that it may be considered the rule; but it strikes one less, as their knowledge is generally subservient to some use and object, or at least serves as an employment. But I have also found it in women, and in them a disproportion between acquired information and thought is more displeasing. I knew in my earliest youth and since I left the University, a woman of this kind, and I have marked her course through life. She knows thoroughly the ancient and most of the modern languages, is free from all vanity and affectation, never neglects a household duty; and yet all the knowledge she has acquired has added no interest to her character. Though she has read the principal and most difficult authors of all nations, yet she never writes a letter worth reading. You remark justly in this connection that Christ chose his disciples from among the class of rude and illiterate men. But this was consistent with the object and spirit of the religion he wished to promulgate, and amongst the people to whom he came there existed none but dry and unprofitable learning: there were only the Scribes, who interpreted the Sacred Books in an arrogant and crafty manner, and treated the people with oppression and scorn.

Maintain your health and cheerfulness. With unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXXII.

TEGEL, May 5, 1832.

I have received your long letter, dear Charlotte, and I thank you sincerely for it. You will be dissatisfied that I have been so long in answering it, as you were suffering from anxiety and were in want of some words of consolation from me, and had requested a speedy answer. It was indeed my firm determination to fulfil your request, but I wished to write to you with my own hand, and for such letters I depend very much on time and circumstance. From the slowness with which I write, I can do very little in an hour, and I never begin a letter unless I have a free morning before me; and even in a morning I can hardly finish with my own hand one that is worth anything.

This dependence upon others, particularly for writing, in which of all things freedom is desirable and even necessary, is one of the most unpleasant and annoying consequences of weak health; for in me it arises rather from infirmity than from old age. I am not unreasonable enough to expect much amendment from any means I may use; I shall be quite contented if the inconvenience does not increase or become more burdensome. Most people are discontented through their own unreasonable expectations: from their complaints at being obliged to resign what they formerly possessed, they seem to forget that they have hitherto enjoyed those blessings, and are only now deprived of them.

I was much concerned to hear that you had had such a painfully anxious time as you describe, and that you were obliged to be an eye-witness of that distressing illness which terminated in death.† * * * * * I can

† Here follows the history of the suffering and illness of a poor child, which were only alluded to as the means of introducing some consoling reflections.

sympathise most sincerely in the indisposition arising from your over-excited feelings, and I am very glad to find, both from the commencement and the close of your letter, that you are tolerably recovered.

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What you say of a gentle and peaceful appearance in the dead, even after a severe struggle, is noticed by all. Some appear as if already glorified. There are certainly cases of a different kind, where the expression of pain or of fearful suffering is not obliterated by death. I have seen such on the battle-fields of 1813 and 1815; but some amongst the fallen even there had repose in every feature. This beautifying in death (for by that name alone can it be called) is the prerogative of man. With the brute creation it is the contrary; the most magnificent horse one sees dead on the field of battle is ugly and repulsive.

The reason lies in the impression made by the soul upon the countenance. This impression, when the disposition has not been soured, is naturally peaceful and calm, and to a certain extent noble, even in those of limited mental compass. In life this peaceful impression is sometimes lost from momentary passion, or from the circumstances in which the individuals are placed. During the suffering caused by illness, this is doubly the case. With death that momentary influence on the features yields, the original and natural expression returns, and remains as in a picture, as long as the corporeal frame exists, without, however, the abiding presence of soul. In this of course there reigns perfect tranquillity, as the excitement of life is hushed in eternal repose. Perhaps also this appearance has another and more interesting cause. We see,—how can we do otherwise?—that death is a separation—a freeing of the soul from the corporeal fetters. But we know not certainly where the freed spirit goes. Perhaps it changes its earthly nature at the moment of its release, and sheds a parting ray on the body it has left behind, as we see in the expression still remaining upon

the features. Everything in these moments is wonderful and incomprehensible; and when we ourselves arrive at the close of life, we shall know no more, even if our faculties remain clear to the latest moment, for it is certain that life terminates in complete unconsciousness. Nature throws a thick veil over her transformations.

I have just received your letter, begun on the first day of Easter, and sent away on the first of May. I am very glad to find that you are free from positive illness. Your strength will soon return.

I can easily believe that you miss very much the poor little girl who had grown up beside you, and on whom you had bestowed so much care. You must try, however, to supply her place. I have often experienced the truth, that the loss of one connected with us merely in our usual avocations is not irreparable;—and this is certainly taking a charitable view of mankind. We do not lament for one who is gone because we have lost something external, but because he himself—his inner being—is no longer associated with us. Truth, love, and friendship, cannot indeed be restored if once removed by death.

Do your best to regain your strength and to keep yourself cheerful, and rest assured of my sincere friendship.

H.

I am very glad to find that you feel greater strength of mind, and still more that you ascribe to me some share in the change. I have never dwelt particularly on my own views in our correspondence, and have always treated every subject that came under our notice with perfect impartiality. I believe (more than many men superior in talent to myself) that the subjects of thought and feeling discussed between friends should be thoroughly studied and investigated. I have always made myself and my own heart an object of study, and from thus dwelling upon my own sentiments and

feelings, and knowing my own wants, I can tell what will give strength to others. I can understand, therefore, what you say of my letters, though you rate them too highly. Their influence arises from the fact that on the one side the thoughts are clearly and distinctly expressed, and that on the other they are perceived to be true by your inward experience.

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You remarked in a recent letter that pride had caused you much trouble. The subjugation of pride is certainly praiseworthy, and I am glad that you have so far succeeded. There is a species of pride, however, that exists in every rightly-thinking mind, which should rather be designated a just estimate of self. It is, properly speaking, the elevation of mind which occurs when we feel that we have completely mastered a noble idea, and made it our own. Man is proud of his ideas only in so far as they become part of himself. We most easily and securely avoid the by-paths where pride lurks, if we are genuine and unaffected in all our actions, and dismiss energetically the first indication of pride, which has no further value than as prompting us to do that as a matter of course, for the omission of which we must have reproached ourselves.

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I am glad that you mention the planet Saturn. I have seen him this week with great pleasure. The return of the planets after a course of years to their place in the same constellations is very interesting. For Saturn, however, according to the astrologers, we can have little attachment. I remember seeing Jupiter more than once in Leo, the first time at a very happy period of my life.

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You will soon receive my "Correspondence with Schiller," which you should have had ere now. I have given orders for it to be sent to you. Prefixed to the letters you will find an Introduction treating of Schiller and the develop-

ment of his mind, which will serve as a guide to you in studying his writings. I go through his works, from the earliest to the latest, showing how he advanced from one to the other. The letters also refer to his works written during the time we were absent from each other. Scarcely any one could know Schiller more thoroughly than I did. Few saw so much of him, or were in such close intimacy. Such a man was not born for trade and traffic, but for poetry and thought—to see—to speak; and whole days and nights have we spent together in conversation. Though the years we were together were few, our lives were one.

The beautiful weather continues;—everything begins to bud and to shoot forth.

Fare you well.—With unalterable sympathy and friendship, yours, H.

LETTER XXXIII.

TEGEL, June 4, 1832.

I have not received a line from you, dear Charlotte, since my last letter, and I cannot say that I am entirely without anxiety. But perhaps before I close this letter, one from you may arrive. In the meantime I must trust to your assurance, that if you are not able to write yourself, you will take some means to convey intelligence to me. But I still write to you as usual. It always seems to me unfriendly to insist upon the constant exchange of letter for letter, and never to send one unless another has been received. It leads in the end also to still greater irregularity. Besides, you have often told me how glad you are to receive my letters, and an unexpected one will give you double pleasure. I must ask you to send your next so that it may arrive here on the 25th. I am going again to Nordernei, and shall probably leave home on the 1st of July, and I wish to receive a letter from you, dear Charlotte, a short time before. I undertake this journey reluctantly, not that I dislike Nordernei or sea-bathing, but that I am unwilling to leave Tegel, my usual residence, and to interrupt some important scientific labours to which I devote the greater part of the day, and which now constitute the greatest interest of my life. Not only, however, does my physician recommend the journey, but I myself feel that it is important. The infirmities which were partially removed by the sea-bathing last season, are gradually acquiring strength again. I do not wonder at this. When we have arrived at that period of life at which old age exercises a decided influence upon the health and strength, we must not look upon bodily infirmity, or even more serious illness,

as a mere passing weakness, but rather as an inevitable consequence of added years. This I feel distinctly, and should not complain even if my ailments were more serious than they are. Nordernei has done me good before. My weakness probably arises from a morbid condition of the spine, and salt-water bathing, and particularly the action of the waves, are the most likely means to prevent the complaint from gaining strength. So I shall go for two months, in order to be able to work again with greater vigour.

5th June.

I was interrupted yesterday, and have now, as I hoped, received your letter, and I thank you very sincerely for its contents. You will see that I have anticipated your kind wish to hear of my health. I think it is very natural that the tendency of your mind should be to serious thought. This temperament is found in all thinking minds, it is appropriate to advanced life, and to your own peculiar disposition. The painful events you have experienced, and the recent occurrence in your own household, might have induced such a state of mind, however, without any previous tendency to it.

I cannot quite enter into your ideas respecting death and its relation to life. No one can fear it less than I do. I do not cling to life, and yet I am far from feeling an earnest desire for death, as, although this is better than satiety of life, it is still to be condemned. Life must, so long as it is the will of Providence, be enjoyed and suffered, —in one word, must be accomplished,—and must be borne with perfect resignation, without dejection, murmuring, or complaint. There is an important law of Nature, that should never be lost sight of: I mean that of our maturity for death. Death is not a cutting off of being, but merely a transition—a passing from one form of external being to another. Both conditions, here and hereafter, are so con-

nected, so inseparably bound up together, that the first moment *there* can only commence with the last moment *here*, when the perfect development of the being is completed. No human wisdom can calculate, no inward feeling point out, the moment of this maturity for death, or the impossibility of advancing further. To attempt this would be vain presumption of human pride. He only who is in a position to penetrate and examine the whole of our being can do this, and it is the dictate alike of duty and of wisdom to commit the hour to Him, and never to oppose our impatient wishes to his determination. Believe me, if you examine these views thoroughly, you will find them to be the only ones that will lead us in peace through life, and that will never leave us without support. The first and most important duty in life is to learn to govern ourselves, to submit calmly to what is inevitable, and to look upon every circumstance, fortunate or the reverse, but as a means of acquiring greater mental and moral power. Thence arises that true resignation which so few really possess, but which all think they have. Almost every one considers resignation a duty up to a certain point, but beyond that they deem themselves exempted from the obligation. From the true resignation which is always accompanied by a feeling of confidence that an immutable and equal goodness brings the most unexpected and adverse circumstances to a blessed consummation, proceeds a calm cheerfulness in the prospect even of a disturbed and troubled life. To maintain or to acquire this cheerfulness should be the earnest endeavour of all. It cannot be fully attained in every moment of life, nor can it be bestowed; it must be created in the soul itself. But it never fails to arise when the soil is prepared for it; and this preparation consists principally in the cultivation of a thoughtful, peaceful tone of mind, free from all egotism. This every one has it in his power to acquire by the exercise of reason and the strength of will. But some discipline and preparation are necessary. Suitable

employments contribute much to the composure of the spirits. No thought should be indulged which can be condemned after a calm and impartial examination.

Farewell, and rest assured of my unchangeable sympathy, H.

LETTER XXXIV.

TEGEL, June 26, 1832.

I have received your friendly letter of the 17th, dear Charlotte, and I thank you sincerely for it. You inquire affectionately after my health. Upon the whole, I cannot be sufficiently grateful for my present state. I really suffer from nothing, and am not considered an invalid either by those who see me daily, or only occasionally.†

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You remark very justly that I was not so liable to these attacks of illness before the loss of my wife, and that they have since become more severe. It certainly is so. To one who feels such a loss to be irreparable, the depressing sense of it increases as time wears on. But I dwell too long upon myself, and I will break off.

I read with great pleasure what you said of yourself in your last letter. I believe I quite understand it. It contains at the same time so many expressions of attachment to myself, that I read it with double pleasure. If I understand you rightly that the present inclination of your mind is to be contented with the present and hopeful for the future, I quite approve of it. In old age, a life of contemplation is the most suitable. There is still much to be said upon what you justly term your more profound ideas. As you add that they form a part of yourself, and enter largely into your plan of life, I will endeavour to explain. The exquisite passage which you quote from Herder is so con-

† Here follow some details of illness, which, though kindly meant, were painfully interesting to me;—but they would probably weary the reader.

sistent with my own opinion, that I cannot refrain from briefly entering into it. Herder says, very beautifully and truly, that deep and hidden strength comes to light in man which could never have become active unless the individual had gone through much. I can say with truth, that it is in this view alone that life has any importance for me, and that it is quite incalculable what strength may be called forth by the varying circumstances of life. The development of every germ that lies in the individual nature of a man, and not the acquirement of happiness, I consider the true aim of earthly being. I do not calculate upon happiness for myself in these latter years of life, but I receive it gratefully when it comes unsought. To speak figuratively, in old age we encounter the decay and decline of many events. But in that state we have more strength to bear real affliction as the inevitable consequence of the chain of circumstances; and Providence has wisely decreed that every objection which could be raised against the government of the world falls at once to the ground after thoughtful consideration. I like Herder's writings very much, and value the author personally. You will find mention made of him in the Introduction to my Correspondence with Schiller. Your letter alluded also to two other subjects to which I wished to reply,—namely, the engraving of Napoleon at the point of death, and the propriety of second marriages. But neither time nor paper will permit more to-night.

Direct your next letter to Nordernei by Aurich, between the 15th and 20th of July.

With unchangeable and sincere sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER XXXV.

NORDERNEI, August 2, 1832.

Here I am again, dear Charlotte, occupying the same rooms, and leading the same not very agreeable life. Such a residence year after year seems to me rather singular. It makes me ask myself whether next year will see me here again,—and if not, for what reason. I am not so foolish as to expect to be able to dispense with bathing. I am neither ill nor well. The infirmities of old age, which, owing to peculiar circumstances, have come upon me early, may be affected by the regimen I pursue here; but they can only be alleviated, not cured. I say this intentionally, lest your friendly interest in me should make you indulge hopes which must be disappointed. But I believe I may reasonably calculate upon deriving some benefit. My daughter is here with me again. The bathing was so beneficial to her last year, that it would have been wrong not to repeat it. The arrangements here are now much improved.

The report in the newspapers that I was going to the Rhenish Provinces was quite without foundation. They might save themselves the trouble of alluding to me. I go on in my usual way, and dislike all trifling journeys and roundabout ways so much, that I always avoid them. If I did not dread a long absence from home, I should go to Italy or England, and I may possibly undertake the journey, particularly if my sight grows weaker, and prevents me from engaging in my usual employments.

I am very glad that my Correspondence with Schiller has given you pleasure. The book has answered remarkably well. I had promised the edition to Schiller's heirs. They asked me for the letters after many years had passed, and

it cost me much trouble to arrange them. I was obliged to go through the whole correspondence in order to reject those which were not suitable for publication; and there were so many of these, that the matter dwindled to nearly a half. This work occupied several months in the winter, and then I had to write the preface. I did not expect any great interest to be excited by the book except for some of Schiller's letters and a very few of mine; but the result has surpassed my expectations, and the book is much more read than I thought likely, especially by women. Many have spoken to me about it, and a few have written at some length that they quite enter into the ideas expressed, and some go even further.

I do not agree with you that the book would have answered better if it had appeared earlier. I am in general quite opposed to the publication of letters; but it is justified in this case by the name of one truly great man, to whom the other is throughout subordinate. Letters always bear a tinge of the real life of the writer. The more remote the period at which they appear, the more they take one by surprise. Immediately after death, they give but a feeble renewal of the reality living in the memory: appearing after a longer time, they bring back those of whom we had almost ceased to think, with all the circumstances that surrounded them in life. I did not think it could offend if letters were introduced which referred somewhat technically to that subject which at the time engrossed our own attention. Not that rules can be given for the cultivation of the poetic art: such a view is not brought forward in the course of this correspondence, as may be seen if you read some passage on versification. Both Schiller and I sought only to lay down the principles from which the feeling springs, and the conditions to which it is subject. The feeling must arise in every one who perceives the truth of the principles, as they include other and equally great ideas; and one who does not agree with the principles may yet find his feelings

interested, and by an attempted refutation may perhaps elicit the truth.

I do not remember the passage in "Delphine."* If Madame de Staël meant that a marriage entered upon in youth and lasting till old age is the most productive of happiness, I am quite of her opinion. But I fear such was not her meaning, and that it is an assertion founded on a superficial French idea. You must not suppose that I underrate De Staël. She was, according to my firm conviction, a truly great woman, not merely in mental power but in genuine deep feeling and a self-sacrificing character. She had a refined susceptibility for the feminine virtues, and was in her secret feelings opposed to the French character; but French ideas sometimes appear in her works, which cannot be wondered at, as she always lived in France. She learnt German late in life: I gave her some lessons myself in Paris.

But to call marriage more a necessity of old age than of youth, is an idea opposed by nature, truth, and every finer feeling. The vigour of youth is the true foundation of marriage. I do not say of course that the happiness of the state ceases with youth, or even that it is in the least diminished. But the remembrance of youth enjoyed together must continue in advanced years, if the happiness is to be complete, and not lose the characteristics of the conjugal state. This view must not be considered a sensual one. The deepest and holiest feelings are closely connected, and we must deny all love if we did not acknowledge this. A young, mutually-attached, wedded pair, is in the highest degree an exhilarating spectacle, even in the lower stations of life, in so far as the feeling has the refinement which nature gives it in well-disposed minds. This cannot be said

* Madame de Staël states in Delphine that marriage is desirable and necessary for old age or advanced life when one is alone, but that the young find their joys everywhere.

of marriages consummated at forty or forty-five, whether they be first or second. We will not blame them;—let each indulge his own feelings. Such unions may be reasonable —they may also be happy—for those whose happiness does not depend greatly upon their feelings. But one who feels deeply would never enter into such. Both men and women will feel that in such a union, if the object of early love has been torn away, or has never been found, they must resign a bliss the true spring-time of which can never again bloom for them. It will be impossible for them, in such a case, to comprehend the desire for so low an enjoyment.

I cannot agree in what is said by many of old age. It may be unhappy and joyless;—but so may youth; and, the circumstances being the same, I do not find age, even with the infirmities it brings with it, destitute of happiness: the nature only of some of the joys is different. To me they arise from a solitude in which I am occupied exclusively with my thoughts and feelings. This increases every day. I feel myself happy in this, and this alone; and this is so evident, that the really judicious amongst my oldest acquaintances, though silent respecting this disposition, honour it in deed. To me it is doubly dear, as it agrees with my age and my situation. Pardon me that I have again reverted to myself; but these things are of a kind which one can only discuss from his individual feeling. Who could presume to decide respecting others?

I cannot yet determine my return; but I will ask you to write to me at Berlin, so that the letter may arrive there between the 26th and 30th August.

With sincere and unchangeable sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER XXXVI.

TEGEL, September 3, 1832.

I returned here safe and sound on the 26th of August, dear Charlotte, and resumed my usual occupations the day following. I expect to continue to derive the benefit I have already experienced from bathing. The weather in August was beautiful at Nordernei, without storm or rain, and never too hot, as the sea-breeze was always refreshing. The sun was frequently clouded: it is a peculiarity in the climate of all islands, particularly of small ones, to have very mild air, with but few sunny days. In Ireland, for instance, there are incredibly few bright days.—I have been convinced by my residence this year at the sea-side, that if one, as is natural, takes moderate care of his own health, and is not sensitively afraid of inconveniences, he must wish for bad rather than good weather. In quiet, fine weather, the sea is little better than a large bathing-tub: storms and waves give it life and soul. As the sea in its sublime uniformity brings various images before the soul, and awakens the greatest variety of thoughts, it first became quite evident to me, from violent continued storms, what flattering gentleness the sea has in its greatest terrors. The wave, which swallows up what it seizes, comes sporting on, and covers the deep abyss with bright foam. The sea has been called deceitful and treacherous;—but there lies in this trait of character great natural strength, which, to speak according to our own feelings, renews its powers, and, mourning over no sorrow and exulting over no joy, follows eternal laws, which are imposed by a higher Power.

I found everything here, in both house and garden, in the best order. In the garden I find a very agreeable change

from last year, when I returned home only a few days later. Everything is still beautifully green. This must arise from the summer having been cool and wet, which has great effect upon these sandy soils. Last year I returned home at the time the cholera appeared, and many were in great anxiety, and some in utter consternation. I myself took the usual precautions. Now the cholera is in many places, and may very probably reach Berlin, though at present there are no signs of it. But if it does appear, we need not dread it much more than any other illness. One may become accustomed to anything, and the terrors of cholera are more those of the imagination than reality. Illness of any kind may be much aggravated by fear and anxiety.

You praise my tranquillity, and lament the general impatience of men under illness. This arises from the fact that most men depend upon external activity for their happiness, and illness puts a stop to that. But this is not my case: the perfect quiet which sickness enforces is not objectionable to me. The uneasiness and confusion caused by some kinds of illness might be lessened if the invalid were to exhibit more tranquillity of mind. It is quite a different thing with positive pain. But even in such cases a great deal may be done. A man has gained much who looks on illness not as suffering to be yielded to, but as a work to be accomplished; for it is certain that the sufferer himself can contribute greatly to the restoration of his health and strength. What you call my tranquillity is no merit of mine, but a fortunate tendency of temperament. If I am quietly left to myself, and no one troubles himself about me, or makes me anxious by too much pity, or weary by unasked cares, an illness must be very tedious and severe to make me impatient.

You do not refer in your last letter to the subject of old age; but I am still of the same opinion not merely as regards myself but also as regards others. At the same time I do not say that it was my wish to become old: this is even less

the case than that I now desire to become much older. I have never encouraged the habit of wishing, but as I have become old without any action of my own, it appears to me best to dwell upon the privileges of the decline of life, rather than bring forward its inconveniences. These I remember only with the view of guarding myself against the failings of old age, and especially from over-estimating my powers. For I quite agree with you, that at some period of life, though an indeterminate one, the mental powers do decline. But old age, whether it be a beneficial appointment of nature or not, is one of the developments of human life; and it would be wrong if man did not strive to discover which of his thoughts, feelings, and emotions, shared his physical decline. It cannot be avoided,—let us therefore take the noblest view of it. We must not dismiss old age with the commonplace observation that we retain experience and lose the sense of suffering. This view arises from taking too low a point of survey,—and what in this sense we call experience and suffering are of little value. In respect to the former, old age itself has nothing to do. An active and energetic life is necessary to collect experience. But in men naturally well-disposed, old age brings peace and patience, cessation of the struggles for independence, and freedom from anxious cares;—and these privileges and advantages elevate and improve all else. Old age is sometimes accused of producing the opposite of all this; but such cases are rare, and only in natures of which it is not worth while to speak. In many, on the contrary, there is either a praiseworthy cheerfulness, or a more earnest and reflective tone of mind, which has nothing gloomy in it. From these different tendencies it arises that some old people seek society and some prefer solitude. Old age affects different individuals according to their original varieties of character. If the inclination be to inward contemplation, the man cultivates the materials of thought collected during his life, to which all his experience belongs, whilst he rejects some as

not worthy of preservation. I do not think that the result of this is naturally the composition of a book, but generally a living or dreaming over ideas of all sorts, a spiritual brooding over the past and future, or rather a thoughtful union of the two. If the individual, by taste or necessity, directs his energies to external realities, he becomes in old age, according to Schiller's ideas, fit for little else than to heap sand grain upon grain.

Respecting suffering, there is much to say,—but I must return to it some other time. I am enjoying the prospect of spending an undisturbed year in this place.

I must ask you to give up our former agreement in respect to our letters. Farewell. I hope you are enjoying yourself in your garden this beautiful weather. — Ever yours, H.

LETTER XXXVII.

TEGEL, Oct. 4, 1832.

Your letter of September 27, dear Charlotte, was so full of communications that cheered my heart from referring to what had secured greater tranquillity for you, that I was sincerely rejoiced to receive it. I shall commence with your first subject,—namely, the cholera, which I was very glad to see by the papers was not very malignant in K. Your letter appears to me to confirm this. It may become more severe, but the great dread of its ravages has disappeared,—and with reason. The disease is not so fatal, and men have now become wiser. You are perfectly right when you say that the preparations to meet it, and the formidable funerals of its victims, excite more fear than would be occasioned by the disease itself, which from its rapidity causes so short a period of suffering. I was myself at one time of opinion that it was contagious, but I am now convinced of the contrary. I hope you may remain quite free from any attack of this fearful complaint. I am very glad to be able to think of your retired life in your garden, and still more of your simple and regular way of living. There is much less danger of illness being fatal to one who lives in this manner, and has so little fear of death. If, however, you should be in the least unwell, let me know immediately, and with the assurance that you will do so I shall be quite easy even when you are silent. May Heaven preserve your health! My own continues very good. I have not even a threatening of illness. The only circumstances that give me any cause for complaint are, that I require more sleep than formerly,—that after any particular exertion I feel in my joints a sensation—not of weariness, but of helplessness,—

I might say a want of flexibility, and that my sight and hearing are becoming duller. You may be quite satisfied that I have nothing further to complain of: I am quite contented myself.

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Man is apt to judge of things not so much by their intrinsic worth, as by their agreement with his own preconceived ideas.

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Man reconciles himself to almost any event, however trying, if it happen in the ordinary course of nature. It is the extraordinary alone that he rebels against. A moral idea is associated with this feeling, because an unlooked-for occurrence of that sort appears more like an injustice of Heaven.

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We are accustomed to say that habit makes unpleasant things endurable. I do not believe that the impression made is different, but merely that, seeing the return of the evil to be inevitable, a man resigns himself to it.

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It is the noble prerogative of man that he can say to sorrow and to death, "I will endure you!"—and thus he possesses real power over them. Without this power, the constant prospect of grief and suffering would be productive of great and positive misery. The suffering and the remedy spring from the same source. With illness—I mean in all its various forms—it is otherwise. There is only *one* state of health, but there are many forms of sickness. These have their being, like other active agents, upon earth. They often arise without any apparent reason, and disappear in the same manner. It is remarkable that the ancients had complaints of which we fortunately know nothing, and *vice versa*. No less strange are the varieties of disease that occur, as we now witness in the cholera. It is not yet decided whether this complaint, which excites so much atten-

tion, be communicated from one individual to another, or by the air: most probably the latter.

November.

What do you say of this extraordinarily beautiful autumn? I did not think that I should have seen another like the last. It appears more like the continuation of summer than the entrance into winter.—I still walk for an hour at sunset. It is the quietest time on stormy days, and the brightest on rainy ones. No doubt you have often observed that the sun, as he sinks, forms by his own beams a stripe of light, in which he sets. If dark clouds obscure this light, it generally rains after the setting, and sometimes during the time. It is to me the pleasantest part of the day.

You tell me that the *rosa centifolia* is in bloom in K. I have seen it here also, to my great surprise. In southern countries this repeated blossoming is common enough. We see by this that vegetable life has the inclination, so to speak, constantly to bring forth flowers, but is prevented by unfavourable circumstances. However long and dreary the winter may be, we are indemnified by the spring,—not merely by the enjoyment of it when it comes, but by the anticipation of it. This desire is one of the simplest and most natural, and one of the purest sources from which every other desire flows which creates any greatness in the soul and calls up its deepest thoughts. This is certainly one of the reasons why the Northern nations possess a poetry that addresses itself more to the profounder nature of the heart than those in the South, though the latter may have a richer language. There is much in the influence of surrounding Nature upon us, and this arises not so much from its affording us enjoyment, as from its awakening our emotions, and bringing our powers into activity. Fare you well.—Yours, H.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TEGEL, December 1832.

The tone of tranquillity and even of cheerfulness, in which your last letter was written, dear Charlotte, has given me very great pleasure. I now entertain a decided hope that this tone of mind will become habitual. I am the more inclined to indulge this hope, as your health has been so much stronger since you were relieved from the painful anxiety which had so long oppressed you, and you have again resigned yourself to the calmness and composure which a mind like yours, at one with Providence, must always enjoy.

* * * *

It is very natural that during times of extraordinary excitement, calculated to produce serious thoughts, minds of an earnest tone should become still more reflective. To the desire to leave nothing unfinished and incomplete, is added a moral feeling, and one certainly deserving of all respect.

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Man feels an obligation to imitate, in the narrow circle of his being, the great ideas which exist within him, and which he sees stamped upon Nature. And often when he thinks he is prompted by quite different motives than those derived from ordinary life, he does in fact follow this secret bias. Human nature is generally much nobler in its depths than appears upon the surface. It is the same in other points. Vain or frivolous men are in some cases of greater importance than even they themselves imagine.

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You use in your letter the expression—"to set his house in order." This has always appeared to me a very pertinent and valuable saying. It is an ancient, truly scriptural expression, which, like many such, derives its value from being drawn from the realities of life, and going deep into the soul. Long ago, before I reached the age at which household arrangements became necessary, I always endeavoured to make pauses in life, and found the habit very useful. There is also a setting in order of the soul as well as of the house. A man then fixes his mind upon a narrow circle of emotions, surrenders other feelings to oblivion, and rejoices in the repose produced by this restriction. If he does this rightly, it requires to be done but once. He does not then neglect the range of thought he has thus marked out and circumscribed.

You praise my patience. There is nothing praiseworthy in it, and it has cost me no effort to acquire: I might say it was born with me. The time that a piece of work occupies never appears long to me.

You mention a circumstance which happened long ago in Holzminden in Brunswick. This has forcibly recalled something to my memory. From that small place I went in 1789 with Campe to Paris. Campe came from Brunswick, and I from Göttingen. This journey, of which you have read, as Campe published an account of it, was short, but it was my first out of Germany. Campe was, as I think I have told you, a tutor in my father's family;—there is still a long row of trees here that he planted. He certainly had an unhappy and lamentable end. He was quite imbecile during the last years of his life. I was taught by him to read and write, and learnt from him something of history and geography on the old-fashioned plan of chief towns, the seven wonders of the world, &c. He had a very happy natural talent of interesting children and bringing them on.

I am perfectly well, and enjoy mental tranquillity. I

wish most heartily that you may close this year in health and cheerfulness, and that the next may open to you in peace! Let your wish for me be, that nothing may occur to disturb my enjoyment of solitude, which is my true happiness, and that I may think of you as tranquil and contented!

With sincerest friendship and unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XXXIX.

TEGEL, Jan. 7, 1833.

Receive first, dear Charlotte, my sincere good wishes for the year we have entered upon. May Heaven bestow upon you health and cheerfulness! Your own desires are so moderate in respect to external circumstances, that a wish from me is scarcely required; but I will not omit even this. Inward peace and tranquillity you must earn for yourself. It is the heavenly gift which, whilst it comes from Heaven, can only be considered to have its rise in the heart of the individual. You have, as I perceive with much pleasure, acquired greater mental power, and as each gains this for himself, there can never be a limit to the acquirement of it.

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A year could not begin under brighter or more favourable auspices than this has done. I go out every day in all weathers, but now with double pleasure.

In November 1835 one of the well-known comets will return. Shall we see it? I neither desire nor expect it. Each return is a point of time which leads our thoughts to Heaven.

* * * *

I often walk by moonlight. In this cold but always dry air, there is nothing to fear from damps or mists as in the evenings in other seasons. The sky is too beautiful at that time to allow me to miss the enjoyment of it. It is altogether inexpressible how much the heavens contribute to beautify the earth. This is so much the more remarkable as the effect is so simple: only stars and clouds, and that

immeasurable arch which alone is an eternity, in which the soul and the imagination are lost. The earth really shines only in the light which the heavens pour upon it. The superior charm of the climate of Italy over that of Germany does not arise from the richness of the soil or the beauty of the country, but because the sky has quite another appearance,—such a deep blue by day, and such an intense black at night,—and the stars shining in such abundance. But on the other hand, it is remarkable that the heavens are so beautiful and mild, because at such a distance they affect the eye only as an optical charm, and every other material influence fades away. It is also worthy of observation how we look upon the sky with its hosts of brilliant stars, more as a subject of the mind and fancy, than as a reality. If one could believe a journey amongst the planets possible, it would be, it appears to me, an object of dread and fear. If we were beyond the limits of our atmosphere, which in its higher regions only is unpleasant, we should come upon the rolling and motion of these gigantic heavenly bodies, which in a clear view, as masses of light and shade, would be equally formidable. A nearer approach, by which many stars would appear larger, is not desirable. The greater lights in greater number would be too uniform, and would outshine the lesser and more distant ones, and make them invisible. I cannot imagine that our nights would be made more beautiful by this earth being attended, like some of the other planets, by more satellites. Saturn's ring is one in a different form. If we think of this as a golden double bridge stretched over the heavens, it would present an extraordinary appearance. From all this we may conclude that the heavens, which in a spiritual sense every one wishes near to him, are materially so much more beautiful at a distance.

This very long digression upon the heavens has been induced by the remarkable beauty of yesterday evening. Besides the brilliancy of the moon and stars, sounds came

from the frozen lake, which can be so clearly distinguished in the stillness of night: they resemble sometimes a crashing and crackling, but more generally a long-continued, mournful noise.

Fare you well.—With sincere unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XL.

TEGEL, Feb. 9, 1833.

I am sorry, dear Charlotte, that you will receive this letter rather later than usual. I have been in town on business for some days, and I can get no quiet writing done there. As I seldom visit Berlin, all my business accumulates, and I have no time to begin anything for myself, even if I had the inclination. In this way I missed the first day of the month, on which I am accustomed to write to you. I hope you have not been uneasy at the delay of the letter. I entreat you never to be so, dear friend, or you will give undue importance to the slight and trivial reasons why I cannot write on this or that day, and I can as little foresee these causes as you can guess them. But you may safely suppose, if my letter does not arrive at the usual time, that the delay arises from some trifling circumstance. As I am accustomed to write to you at the same period in each month, a longer interval between any two brings round the next in quicker succession,—and this gives you pleasure, since you value my letters so much more highly than they deserve. Your pleasure is also mine, and this consideration induces me cheerfully to sacrifice the time the writing costs me.

I returned here yesterday, and now sit down to have some conversation with you, for our correspondence should rather be called by that name. As it relates mostly to subjects of thought, and refers little to the circumstances of external life, it more resembles a spoken dialogue than written letters. Ideas, indeed, are the only genuine things remaining in life: they are, in the truest sense, what serve

to occupy long and earnestly the minds of all thinking men. It is principally this in my letters that makes them interesting to you. It gives me very great satisfaction that you now no longer press me, as you used to do, to write about myself and my own circumstances, to do which is not at all in accordance with my inclinations. But you must not think that I wish you to be silent on these subjects as regards yourself. On the contrary, it gives me great pleasure to view your inner life through your outward circumstances. Do not neglect to give me this insight from time to time as heretofore.

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You ask me in your last letter to give you some explanation of my exact meaning as to what must be done at certain epochs in life, which we call "setting our house in order." I understand by the phrase something very simple and of ordinary meaning. We say we have set our house in order, when we have taken care to arrange everything in case of our death. The phrase also includes the settlement of what we leave behind us after our departure. This setting in order prevents all confusion, uncertainty, and restlessness, and demands regularity, thoughtfulness, and tranquillity of mind. We borrow the expression from external, worldly life; but it has a higher and nobler sense in relation to the spiritual life. There are also ideas more or less important — more or less connected with the earthly being — directly or indirectly associated with the highest aspirations of man. I do not mean exactly — or at least not exclusively — religious ideas. What I here refer to are not generally considered to belong to that sphere. It cannot be determined which shall be called the highest and most important. But every man finds from his own experience that he is apt to devote the shortest period of his leisure to what lies the deepest in his nature, and allows himself to be robbed of his hours of meditation by subordinate objects. This must be put an

end to, all distracting occupations resigned, and the energies bent upon more important objects. But this self-collection, as it may be called, upon the short remaining span of life, relates still more to the dominion of feeling. There is here in general a greater and more important distinction. In intellectual subjects, we have fuller control over our resolutions, and can direct our thoughts and meditations to a certain point. In cases of feeling, this is not only impossible, but would not be desirable. In the dominion of feeling, it is impossible that anything unnatural or forced should exist. The change can only proceed from within, and may be compared to the ripening of fruit. It takes place of itself, as the whole tone of mind discovers that this release from the present state of existence is quite overlooked in the mind. The change consists in a simple withdrawing of the mind from other objects, and fixing it upon itself. Yet here, still less than in the dominion of thought, is its individuality expressed by any important utterance. In this simple manner my mind has been so concentrated upon one emotion as to be inaccessible to every other, in so far at least as respects my receiving any gratification from other emotions. For I am not become in any way cold and unsympathising,—only resigning any claim upon others, and not looking for happiness either from my fellow-creatures or from outward circumstances. I should feel any calamity like another man;—that would be human nature: pain and deprivation must be felt as evils. But they would not deprive me of my peace of mind;—that would be prevented by the reflection that such circumstances are but the natural conditions of human existence, and that during the course of a long life a man should acquire the power to maintain his higher and better nature amidst the conflict of circumstances.

I know not whether I have made myself clear to you. If I have not, or if my views do not appear to you to be

correct, I will return to the subject, and enter into it more in detail.

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You speak in your letter of artificial assistants to thought which you have contrived, and you propose to tell me more about them if I wish it. Pray do so. Farewell.—With constant sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XLI.

TEGEL, March 8, 1833.

This month also I am beginning my letter much later than I intended, dear Charlotte, and as it takes me a long while to write, it will be some time before you receive it. But you must never be uneasy on this account;—yet you will say that we cannot thus control our feelings. I always intend to write to you on the first day of the month, but owing to the arrangement of my time, there are often several days together, when, with the best intentions, it is quite out of my power to do so. The forenoon is always dedicated to scientific pursuits: here, at Tegel, I make no exceptions, which in town I am sometimes compelled to do. These labours now constitute my life; my thoughts are all directed to them, and as I now require a great deal of sleep, my mornings are very short. In the afternoon I walk for two hours, and the rest of the day remains for my long letters and a variety of other occupations. Sometimes these are very urgent, as in the present case;—or a visitor arrives, and the progress of my letter to you is unwillingly retarded. I have fortunately fewer interruptions than many others, and I possess one great advantage, that I am never hindered by not being in the humour to write. Sometimes I undertake one piece of work when I should prefer some other, and then I have at the beginning to force my inclinations and urge myself into a frame of mind suitable for it.

These last words have reminded me of your tables. They have interested me very much. It is an original idea to classify the daily occurrences of life, and to record the frame of mind and the various circumstances which act upon it.

Half a life so registered would afford abundant material for comparison and reflection.

The whole of your letter has given me pleasure, as it displays a certain and truly cheerful tone. But I am very much grieved to hear of the recent loss that you have sustained. The departure of many before us, as we advance in years, is a painful trial to our cheerfulness. But I go yet further: even the growing old of those we have known in the vigour of mind and body is very sad. I would willingly be old myself, if those around me could retain their youth. This is, however, though at first view it does not appear so, a selfish wish.

You ask me what I mean, when I say respecting ideas that they are all that remain to man, and that they alone serve to occupy life. The question is not easily answered, but I will endeavour to make myself understood. In the first place, ideas stand opposed to transitory, external objects, and consequently to emotions, desires, and sufferings derived from these. All that relates to selfish views and transitory enjoyments is necessarily antagonistic, and can never be brought into unison with a spiritual idea. But many higher and more noble emotions and deeds,—as benevolence, the care of those who are near to us, and many other equally praiseworthy actions,—are not to be reckoned in the number; and he whose life depends upon ideas will only be influenced by them in so far as the external action is a manifestation of the inward principle. Such a man rests upon an idea;—and this is the case with individuals of a vivid imagination. This idea is that of universal beneficence, and the want of this is a discord, or a hindrance to our union with higher and more perfect spirits, and with the benevolent Mind which exhibits itself in Nature, and animates her every manifestation. But these actions may also spring from a sense of duty; and this sense of duty, when it arises from a feeling of obligation without any consideration of inclination or even of a divine reward,

must be classed amongst the most elevated ideas. But we must be careful to separate the exercises of the intellect and memory from these ideas; for though such may lead to them, they do not themselves deserve the name. You thus see that the Idea arises from something infinite—from an ultimate connection—from something that would enrich the soul if it could set itself free from all earthly ties. All great and important truths are of this nature.

But there are many things which cannot be measured and comprehended by thought, which yet are not the less true. Into our estimate of some of these an artistic imagination enters eagerly; for it possesses the power of exhibiting the sentient and finite,—for example, corporeal beauty, independently of the countenance and its spiritual expression,—as if it were something infinite. The art of poetry is a means of transforming much into ideas which cannot originally be considered in reference to them. Even truth, if it lie chiefly in the thoughts, requires such an addition for its completion. For as we have contemplated the Idea in reference to its object, we may also describe it in reference to the temper of mind which it requires. As it is now a conclusion of the connection, it demands, in order to comprehend it, an entireness of soul—a united working of all the powers of mind; thought and feeling must be in unison, and as feeling, even when most full of soul, has always a reference to something material, the imagination of an artist alone is able to effect a union with thought which stands opposed to all that is material. One who possesses no taste for art, and does not care for poetry or music, will generally find a difficulty in comprehending ideas, and will in no case truly understand and feel what the Idea is. Such differences in men arise from the varieties of their original spiritual temperaments. Cultivation does nothing. It may improve, but it can never create; and there are hundreds of men who cultivate the arts and sciences, who yet plainly show by

every word that the natural disposition—which is the all important thing—is wanting.

The great value of ideas is known especially by the following consideration: Man, when he quits this world, leaves behind him all which does not, exclusively and independently of earthly relations, belong to his spiritual nature. But this is the case with ideas alone, and it is their most marked characteristic. That which has no power to occupy the soul when it feels the necessity of resigning all earthly objects, cannot be reckoned amongst the number. To arrive at this moment of departure with the mind enriched by the possession of purified ideas, is a noble aim, worthy of every faculty of heart and soul.

It was with this reference and for this reason that I called Ideas the only possession that remains to man, because they alone are retained when the world itself disappears. You will perhaps instance love and friendship;—but these are themselves only ideas. Of friendship this is clear. Of love you must excuse my speaking. It may be a weakness, but I utter the word reluctantly, and do not like to hear it from the lips of others. Men have often singular views of love. They imagine they can love more than once, yet only once the right object. They deceive themselves, or have been deceived. I dispute no one's feelings. But what I call love, is quite another thing: it can occur but once in a lifetime, can never deceive, or be itself deceived, and depends entirely upon ideas.

But I fear I have wearied you, without making myself quite clear. If this be the case I must request your forgiveness. It was at your express desire that I wrote to you about it, and the difficulty lies in the subject. But perhaps you may find something tangible, and if you send me more questions, I shall willingly give you further illustrations.—Yours as ever, H.

LETTER XLII.

TEGEL, April 7, 1833.

I have had your letter in my possession a long time, dear Charlotte, but have not been able to answer it sooner. You merely dated it March, and, contrary to your custom, did not mention the day you sent it off. I must request you in future always to insert this. A letter of which one only knows the month in which it is written, is a vague communication, and I always value the mention of the day. The feeling of time exerts a deep influence upon the soul. This arises from the fact, that the thoughts and feelings are affected by time.

* * * *

I have often, even in my childhood, begun to keep journals, but have always destroyed them after a time. I am sorry, however, that I have not preserved as much as would have at least pointed out on each day where I was, what I did, and whom I saw. I should have liked to possess such a record from my tenth year. I do not much value detailed journals which give judgments and reflections upon the deeds and thoughts. It is hardly possible to write such with a view to one's self alone. Even if we show it to no one, we yet write for an imaginary public, and are really more embarrassed than when we exercise judgment upon another individual. The interest in that other draws off the soul from being too much absorbed by self, and consequently promotes candour and ensures a degree of naiveté in the narration. It is especially to be feared that in such remarks we should spare ourselves too much. Exaggeration often lies in opposition to truth. It is rather to be feared that vanity

may be fed by it. The more we are occupied with ourselves, the more apt we are to consider everything that happens to us as more extraordinary than the events that occur to others, and to attach a value to every circumstance as an especial appointment of Providence in respect to ourselves. Such errors, however, may be avoided, and the keeping of a journal may then become an equally pleasing and useful employment.

* * * *

Time is only an empty space, which acquires sense and meaning from events, thoughts, and feelings. But when we think how that meaning has come fraught with joy and sorrow to many men of sensitive nature, our own hearts become affected. Its quiet, calm power also has an almost magical charm. The day on which a great misfortune has overtaken us is, after a long course of years, forgotten and passed over, and calm and unrecognised is the advance of one in which a calamity inevitably awaits us. If we reflect deeply upon the consequences of time, we lose ourselves as in an abyss: there is neither beginning nor end. But a great consolation lies in contemplating the course of life, in which may ever be recognised a sublime law—an eternal controlling will—an immutable order. There is something very soothing in the recognition of this order in all the ordinations of the world, in the frailty of human nature, and in the apparently uncontrolled destructive power of the elements. The regular rising of the sun, and the waxing and waning of the moon, must give something of this feeling even to savage nations. The more the study of Nature is cultivated, the more proofs of this order are perceived. For a correct knowledge of the heavenly bodies, scientific observation is necessary. If this is attained in the highest degree, as with us, deviations from established order become perceptible, and movements which are apparently irreconcilable with other observed laws. These are certain signs that there exist new fields for discovery and investigation;—

for all scientific labour is but the deducing general laws out of new materials and discoveries.

* * * *

You complain in general terms of your memory, but make some exceptions. Few could do more than that. Memory is exercised on various objects, and in no person is it equally good on all points. The most agreeable is a ready memory for poetry. With real taste in the selection, and talent in the repetition, there is none which has a greater charm. But for good recitation many things are necessary: —first, of course,—what only a good education can give to any one,—a just comprehension of the sense, and a good, clear pronunciation, free from all provincialisms; and then what is innate,—a happily constituted, sensitive organization, a fine musical ear for the intonation, a genuine poetic feeling, and a mind in which all the human affections exist in strength and purity. The enjoyment which such a recitation of really beautiful poetry ensures, can in fact never be exhausted. I have frequently derived very great pleasure from it. Learning by heart, and repeating poetry or passages from poems, has a great charm in a solitary life, and often cheers one in a moment of depression. When I was young I committed to memory many passages from Homer, Goethe, and Schiller, which I can recal at any moment, and I shall now never forget them. We cannot do better than thus occupy ourselves with the great thoughts of others.

* * * *

I am thankful to say I am very well, but I am going again in the summer to Nordernei for sea-bathing. My friends say that it alleviates my infirmities, though I can scarcely perceive it myself, and probably you will hardly judge it to be so from my handwriting. But it is possible that the annual use of the baths may prevent these ailments from gaining strength. Perhaps the waters have nothing to do with it. But we are willing to be grateful,

and the sea is a beautiful and noble object for gratitude. It is an annoyance to me to leave this place; but as I must submit to the necessity, I try to enjoy the agreeable part of it, and to pass over the annoyances as lightly as possible, though I leave my present solitude as unwillingly as I should do a beloved friend.

* * * *

In this letter I mention yourself last, dear Charlotte, but you must not attribute this to want of sympathy with you. I wished to draw your attention to my thoughts, into which you always enter with so kindly a feeling. Not that I was not perfectly satisfied with the tone of your mind. Melancholy after the loss of a beloved friend is natural, and can scarcely be considered a painful emotion. The most noble kind of melancholy is always accompanied by a calm resignation, and the expression of this in your last letter makes me value it particularly. This resignation forms an important feature in your mind. I have never indeed observed any want of it in you, but it appears to me to have become now more settled and decided. A sure proof of it is when cheerfulness is the result of resignation.

With the present you are contented: trust also in the future, and dismiss all anxious cares. The future is indeed uncertain,—but remember that Eternal Goodness always watches over us. Confidence should spring from this reflection, which every one should cherish in his bosom.

With earnest sympathy and affection unchangeably yours,

H.

LETTER XLIII.

TEGEL, April 28, 1833.

I am beginning a letter to you, dear Charlotte, before receiving yours.

We shall have to wait unusually long for spring this year: the hedges are just beginning to look green, but no leaves are out. Trees like the oak and the acacia, which are always late, will have but a short summer; for they will scarcely be in full foliage until the commencement of June, and they lose their leaves in September: this is usually the case in the north at least. But there is a sort of compensating power in nature, by which vegetation, when it has once thrown off its torpidity, reaches its full development with incredible rapidity. I have not been further north than Konigsberg, but I cannot describe to you the different aspect presented in spring by one morning from the one preceding it. In southern countries, the change from winter to spring is too slight, and the cheerful awakening of nature is less striking than with us. But they are amply repaid by a thousand other advantages, and never feel the death-like torpidity of our winter. The desire of having this change of season very much marked, resembles the wish to suffer pain in order to enjoy the cure. A climate resembling ours, but much more propitious in the earlier development of nature, the regularity, and the longer continuance of the fine season, is enjoyed in some districts of Southern Germany, and in Switzerland where the high mountains are not too near, particularly around the charming lake of Constance. There Spring reigns in all her glory.

It may be owing to this remarkable season that there is a greater amount of illness, though upon the whole few

deaths. Amongst the deaths, one has occurred which has universally and deservedly awakened deep sympathy, for the deceased was justly beloved, and his family have sustained a severe loss by his death. No doubt you have seen in the papers that Prince Radziwill is dead. He married a Royal Princess, a cousin of our King. They were mutually attached to each other, and were married about the same time that I was. The Princess is a remarkably clever woman, and the Prince was very amiable and benevolent. His talent for music was very well known. He set a great part of Goethe's Faust to music. About three years since, these happy parents had the misfortune, in the midst of their prosperity, to lose two grown-up sons from consumption, with but a short interval between the death of each. This winter the eldest daughter suddenly broke a blood-vessel, and has since had so many consumptive symptoms that her recovery is very doubtful. A fortnight after her illness, her father died quite unexpectedly, under what was thought to have been only a slight attack of influenza. The daughter was in such a weak state that they did not venture to tell her of his death. We can hardly imagine what the poor mother must have suffered, and what it must have cost her to appear cheerful in presence of her daughter, and to speak of her father, now gone to his rest, as if he would soon be restored to health,—and to keep up this effort for weeks. What strength of mind and resignation are exhibited by these remarkable women!

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You allude to Gall in your letter. I knew him personally, and attended his lectures on Phrenology in Vienna in 1797. I have never for a moment had any faith in the science; but it is one of those inventions which, when divested of their quackery, leave behind an important truth. The service which Gall did to science consisted in this, that he first pointed out and established the true form and construction of the brain. He was besides a good physician. I saw him

in Paris on my last visit to that city, and he died while I was there. He left directions in his will, that after death his head should be removed, and his skull added to his own collection; and this was strictly complied with. As he took no fee for his instruction, I could not refuse him the favour of allowing him to take a cast of my head. This is done with living subjects in the same way as with the dead, and he did it so clumsily that I was very nearly suffocated. My cast must be still in his collection. This was no enviable position; for all the vices which according to this theory a man may have had, even if he has escaped from their influence, are, as often as he has the honour of being exhibited at a lecture, exposed in the clear and unequivocal expressions which Gall himself was accustomed to utter in his rough unpolished manner, as I have myself heard in a remarkable instance. He has not certainly spared me any more than others, and in this he was quite right, as I stood in no near connection to him. The fundamental error of Gaul's system is, that he did not sufficiently consider that all the moral and intellectual powers of men are in such intimate union, and form such a closely-connected whole, that they are hardly capable of that superficial parcelling out of the various organs which he has so arbitrarily fixed. In the true spiritual estimate of men, Lavater has displayed quite another head, and quite another mind.

Farewell. I trust you are enjoying the spring.—Be assured of my unalterable sympathy, H.

LETTER XLIV.

TEGEL, June 14, 1833.

I beg you will not distress yourself, dear Charlotte, when your letters are later than usual. You must write to me only when you feel both the power and the inclination, and when communion with me will conduce to your cheerfulness. You have told me more than once, that in case of illness, if you could not communicate it to me yourself, which has never yet been the case, you have a means of conveying the intelligence. This will re-assure me if a letter should not arrive so punctually as is your wont.

This letter of mine will be later too this time than I am accustomed to write to you; but it is the consequence of accidental causes, not of my own mood of mind, which I strive to keep quite independent of all external contingencies.

I was truly sorry to find from your letter that you had over-worked yourself and exhausted your strength, and you wished to be able to tell me that you were recruited. I speak, indeed, as you remark, of activity, and I especially honour yours; but you must not over-task the measure of your strength. At the same time I am not inclined to attribute the weariness and weakness of which you complain entirely to your over-work: I think it probable that the influenza may have had some share in it. It has affected many here in a similar manner. This disease, now ascertained to be an epidemic, exhibits itself in two forms. In most cases it is accompanied by diarrhœa, has a short course more or less violent, and when it is subdued, it leaves behind a feeling of great weakness, and is often followed by other complaints,—nervous fever, for example. Other in-

dividuals affected with the disease are not apparently ill, but feel a great heaviness and weariness in their limbs, as if they had had a severe illness; and these latter do in fact endure more than the former, as their disease does not come to a crisis, and they often suffer for many weeks without any obvious amendment. This may have been the case with you, dear friend;—and then the effort to work has naturally increased the weakness remaining in the limbs, but without causing any decided complaint. The prevalence of this disease has been attributed by many to the great heat which occurred in May. But I earnestly request you not again to make such efforts. I know what you will object, as you have often objected before,—that you must either quite give up your employment, which cannot be done,—or you must answer its continual demands. I have always pictured to myself the occupations of females as being delightful,—because, whilst they demand some degree of attention, they do not so far engross the mind as to preclude the indulgence of thought, fancy, and reverie. It has appeared to me as if the lives of women were more interesting, and, if they possess mental endowments, more plastic, so to speak, than those of the other sex. Very many, nay most occupapations in which men engage give little or no employment to the mind, and yet do not permit the thoughts to turn to anything else. Thus the best faculties of the mind remain uncultivated, and when a time arrives in which the individual is overtaken by calamity, as I know from my own experience, the soul suffers a most distracting strain upon her powers. For minds of deep feeling cannot be diverted from the object of their suffering;—on the contrary, it is by deliberately occupying themselves with that object that they regain their self-possession, and, with it, peace of mind. The proof of what I have said of the difference between the employments of men and of women, I found and still find in the daily observation, that mere men of business, to whom we can deny neither circumspection nor ability in

their own way, yet become for the most part empty, stupid people: their wives, on the contrary, even under circumstances in which household cares leave little or no time for female culture, nevertheless retain considerable mental activity. I have on this account often indulged myself in the merely mechanical work which sometimes falls in one's way, in order to be able to think of something else. But every one may not be so disposed, and I will not judge of others by myself. I always prefer meditation to reading, and sometimes have to set myself to the latter as to a troublesome task. My mind does not dwell upon important circumstances;—I do not exactly dream, but I indulge in a mood which carries me away from the present, be it joyful or sad, and gives to the soul that calmness and equanimity which are so delightful.

I go to Nordernei on the 2d of July, and I should like to receive a letter from you, dear Charlotte, before that time. I do not know whether I shall be able to write to you previously; I certainly must not promise it. It will be impossible for me to write during my journey, but I will do so immediately upon my arrival at Nordernei.

With true and unchangeable attachment, yours,

H.

LETTER XLV.

BERLIN, July 1, 1833.

I go to-morrow, dear Charlotte, to Hamburgh, and my daughters accompany me, as they wish to use the salt-water baths.

I thank you very much for your letter of the 19th, and rejoice to find from it that you are well again. I also am very well, except the trembling of my hand, which naturally increases as the effects of the last year's bathing wear off. I was surprised at your remarking that my writing appeared firmer: I feel myself that it becomes more unsteady. I write so very slowly, that I must limit the time devoted to that work; indeed I have done so already. It would be a misemployment of time, as long as I am capable of working with my head without my hands.

Tell me whether Homœopathy is practised in K. I do not pretend to be able to offer an opinion upon the subject, but I would never put myself under the treatment. The system appears to me to have so much exaggeration in it that it borders upon quackery.

I cannot tell you when I shall write again. As writing fatigues me, and takes a great deal of time, I shall perhaps not be able to write very soon after my arrival;—do not therefore be uneasy if you receive no letter. You cannot think how much it disturbs me to know that those who take an interest in me are anxious about me, even when there is some cause for such anxiety, which however is not the case at present. Composure, when there is real cause for disquietude, is a much nobler state of mind, and much more worthy of the profounder sentiments of our nature.

But anxiety without any good cause is only a source of new disturbance, and that without any useful result.

I wish you to write twice to me at Nordernei by Aurich, —the first letter to arrive on the 20th of July and the second on the 15th of August.

With heartfelt, unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XLVI.

NORDERNEI, July 13, 1833.

I arrived here yesterday at noon safe and well, dear Charlotte, and I send you the information because I know you will be interested in it. I am not particularly fatigued with the journey, although some days I travelled a long distance. But to-day, when I was bathing, I found that I was weaker than last year;—I felt decidedly that I could not stand so firmly against the waves. The attendants attributed this to want of habit, but my own feelings do not deceive me,—and time will exert its influence.

I have not been in Hamburgh for nearly forty years, and I found greater prosperity and activity, and great improvements in every way. It is the same even with this little island. However the so-called great political matters may stand, individuals and their families go on in their usual way, strive to better their condition, to improve the means which time in increasing measure puts into their hands, and to increase those means that they may improve themselves. This is a consoling reflection,—and the grand course of human destiny goes on, much less dependent upon foreign will and chance than appears at first sight.

In Hamburgh I sought out only my oldest acquaintance; amongst others, one with whom, nearly thirty years since, I travelled through Spain. He was then a very young man, and is now surrounded by a group of blooming children. I looked with emotion upon Klopstock's grave. I never knew much of him. My feeling for him arises from the early perusal of his poems. One is accustomed now-a-days to see poetry of a much higher character, and it would

be difficult to read much of Klopstock's continuously. A loftier and more poetical spirit has now been developed. But particular odes, like sounds from another age which had its own form of nobleness, possess a great charm. In the life of the man I have always been displeased that he made his second marriage so conspicuous, even in his epitaph. When the first is a happy connection, I have always been against second marriages. According to the commonly-received ideas of morality, and even of religion, there is nothing to be said against them; but a higher morality and genuine delicacy of feeling are opposed to them. A certain feeling of aversion to them seems almost universal; for in the Greek church, where the priests are permitted to marry, second connections are forbidden to them.

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The beauty of the situation of Hamburgh has again taken me by surprise. The broad stream and the magnificent trees would in themselves be very attractive, even if the opulence and taste of the inhabitants had not transformed the environs into large beautiful gardens, rich in flowers and exotics.

* * * *

The year is now divided for me into two divisions different from those given in the calendar,—namely, the two months which I spend from home, and the ten of peaceful undisturbed residence in my own house. The latter are the only agreeable ones to me, and I welcome the day of my return to Tegel as the commencement of a new year. I sometimes smile at myself for so credulously sacrificing two months of the year. When one reflects upon it, one sees how doubtful is the benefit of such a journey, and that those who have not recourse to it are no worse. It can scarcely be decided whether the imagination has anything to do with it. I come here merely because my physician so wills it, and I make it a rule to follow him implicitly. He is responsible for his own recommendations, and my health is thus rather

his affair than mine. He must have his choice of every possible means.

No doubt, when I reflect upon it, I cannot but acknowledge the advantage of my present residence, since it keeps me away from my books, and enforces more leisure for quiet meditation. I live entirely in my scientific pursuits and those remembrances which give a charm to my present life from the light thrown upon it from the past. If we trace ideas far enough, we find that their origin lies in the deepest, most purely human feelings. These pursuits require both meditation and research into books. Both go hand in hand, but it is a good thing sometimes to be forcibly taken away from our books, not for recreation or amusement, which are not required when a man is engaged in intellectual labours, but in order to pursue those labours uninterruptedly, with nothing external to distract his thoughts. In this I employ myself at my present residence, and I require no companionship and feel no ennui or weariness. The sea with its uniform aspect, and even the barren strand, are agreeable additions.

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Five volumes of Goethe's Posthumous Works have recently appeared. One contains the continuation of his life under the old title, "Truth and Poetry." They were written in the years 1774 and 1775, and a pastor of the name of Ewald in Offenbach is frequently alluded to. There is nothing remarkable related of him: he was merely mentioned by Goethe as belonging to the district in which he lived. Is this the same Ewald of whom you have often written to me? I beg you will tell me this. Unchangeably yours, H.

LETTER XLVII.

Norderney, August 2, 1833.

At the beginning of this month I completed the half of my prescribed course of bathing, dear friend, and you will be glad to hear that I have been able to pursue it uninterruptedly, and find myself, I thank God, very well. Months must elapse before the whole benefit shows itself, but, judging by the present effects, I trust it will not be less than last year. Here, notwithstanding my infirmities, I am considered strong, and in a certain measure I appear so to myself. No vigorous young man could bathe with more energy than I do. I never feel fatigued for a moment after it. I never take anything strengthening, and when I am not out of doors, I employ myself with some interesting object. I do not think the weather has any influence upon me. This certainly shows strength; and as I know you will be gratified with the information, I give it you. But the chief thing is, during the whole life, to inure the soul to bear every hardship. It is incredible how much strength the soul may lend to the body. This requires no great and heroic energy of mind. Internal concentration of spirit is sufficient to enable us to fear nothing, and to desire nothing which our own efforts cannot avert or obtain. In this lies a power difficult to be conceived. A man is not thereby sunk into phlegmatic repose, but may be excited by the deepest and most powerful feelings,—the objects of which, however, do not belong to the external world, but are related to higher existences. He is not free from ardent desire; on the contrary, is often affected by it. It is not that consuming desire which strives after outward advantages, but rather a lively perception of some-

thing better and more beautiful with which the soul has a near affinity.

The weather has been very favourable for bathing since our arrival; for it has been always windy and sometimes stormy,—so the sea has been almost always high and rough, and these strong waves are considered very advantageous. When the sun is bright, as is often the case, the scene is really charming. There is seldom any heat to complain of. As the wind generally comes from the sea, it cools the air. In islands, particularly small ones, great extremes of heat are not of such frequent occurrence as extremes of cold. But this summer we have had very few hot days. My love of great heat does not arise, as you suppose, from my long residence in Spain and Italy. I remember having it from my early childhood.

* * * *

You are certainly right when you say that Madame de Staël and Madame de Laroche were severely treated in Goethe's Correspondence. This is Goethe's fault. In confidential correspondence, as in conversation, we may permit little jests which are not designed to wound, and which we know will be understood. But when private letters come before the world, such passages should be omitted, and Goethe, who published these, has been very careless respecting them. Such slight defects may not be very prejudicial to a work that contains such a host of ingenious and new ideas, and bears upon it the lively impression of the interchange of thought of two noble minds; for there are few works which afford more material for thought,—and this, after all, is the only fit criterion of the value of a book. Goethe and Schiller could not do justice to De Staël, for they did not know her sufficiently. The spirit and sentiment of her nature did not display itself so much in her literary capacity as in her life, and on the side of character and feeling. In her these two elements were combined in a way peculiar to herself. Goethe and Schiller could not perceive this. They knew

her only by particular conversations, and that but imperfectly, as they could not speak French with fluency. These conversations fatigued them, for they were excited by them without being able to express themselves clearly in a foreign language, and thus she who occasioned such conversations became annoying to them. They knew nothing of the true inner being of the woman. What is said of her want of feminine delicacy arises from the trivial talk which is indulged in by both sexes respecting women whose being and nature range beyond the mental horizon of those who thus criticise them. To adhere steadfastly to the highest standard of criticism, is a quality too noble to be met with frequently. Certainly some distinguished women who knew De Staël have never blamed her for being unfeminine, and still less can her writings be considered in this light.

I knew De Laroche also. She was amiable, and in her youth must have been beautiful; but she was not remarkable for her mental endowments. Her writings, however, have not been without their influence upon the female education of her times, as you have more than once mentioned her in your letters to me in terms of great affection, and have attributed this praise to her. In so far she has done a service, the credit of which neither Goethe nor Schiller should have refused her. They thought only of her literary value, which certainly was not much. But we must not regard in a serious light all that they wrote in cheerful sportive mood. The periods of time to which such remembrances carry us back, lie in such far distance that the interest of them increases. More of the characteristics of remarkable people appear after a time. In our judgments respecting them we are influenced by the disposition they exhibited in life, but gradually another disposition appears, till at length what is denominated posthumous fame is built up. Men become in a certain measure like phantoms. Much which belongs to them disappears, and what remains assumes quite a different aspect. Therefore what

we know of them will be received according to the spirit of the existing time. So uncertain is the image which even the greatest men leave behind them in history.

* * * *

My course of bathing will be completed on the 21st of this month, and before the end of it I shall return to Tegel. I am quite well and much stronger, and shall feel the effects still more after a time. I tell you this, dear friend, because you have so often told me with affectionate sympathy that you look first for this intelligence in my letters. So it shall meet you at the close of this letter, and thus bring you sooner what I know gives you pleasure. I hope you will contrive that I shall find a letter from you at Berlin. With the deepest and most sincere sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER XLVIII.

TEGEL, Oct. 6. 1833.

Receive my sincere thanks, dear Charlotte, for your kind letter, which I found here upon my return, and which contains so many expressions of attachment to myself. With respect to my health, I have only to repeat the few words with which I closed my last letter, that I feel much stronger since my bathing, and that my friends consider me better. I have not been much fatigued either with my long journey. The trembling of my hand has not left me, as you will perceive by my writing. Although you do not mention your own health, the tone of your letter shows me that you are well. You know the interest I take in this. No doubt you are enjoying in your garden this beautiful weather, by which the closing year seems determined to make us forget the frequent bad weather in the summer. It is remarkable how peculiarly fine the weather is now, as it was in the spring also. One can hardly expect in twenty years to see a spring so rich in blossom. The beauty of it beggars description. Fine weather is not so gratefully received as its reverse is complained of. Men appear to think that if Heaven withholds from them every other gift, it is bound to secure to them this, the cheapest of all. How much fine weather costs the skies it is truly difficult to calculate. But in its effect on the mind, a really beautiful day is amongst the most precious gifts of Heaven. If we may consider a certain equanimity of temperament as the rule, bad weather never depresses me below that;—a nature little susceptible of external impressions forbids it. But a beautiful day, or a bright starry night, elevates my feelings inexpressibly.

It is possible, whilst cultivating the sense of enjoyment of the beautiful, to dull the susceptibility to unpleasant emotions.

What you say of Herder and Goethe, and the different effects produced upon your mind by their respective writings, has led me into various reflections. I conceive that, after much painful experience, and in a narrow, restricted position, you should not give yourself up to the enjoyment of a fascinating study, of whatever kind it may be, if by that means many of the depressing influences of life are rendered unbearable to you. I have been much affected by your remark, that you carefully avoid the remembrance of the opportunities afforded by your former position to gratify your inclinations in this respect. You add, that with so little leisure you cannot devote yourself to reading without planning it beforehand, and, with these feelings, Herder satisfies the deep requirements of your nature more than Goethe, with whose writings generally you are well acquainted, and have made them the subject of your close study. This is all very natural, but it appears to me to be taking a somewhat partial view, when you say that Goethe has written for the happy alone, and cannot place himself in the position of the sad and joyless, as he has always been himself a spoiled child of fortune. We should never speak so decidedly respecting the feelings of another. Limit your observations to yourself and to those with whom you are thoroughly acquainted, and I shall fully agree with you. But what has struck me most in this part of your letter is, that it clearly shows that there are two perfectly distinct ways of entering upon the study of a book: one with determined aim, and referring entirely to the reader; and another freer view, relating more to the author and his work. Every man, according to his variety of mood, is more inclined to the one way or the other; for they are not completely distinct. The one is employed when we require a book to elevate, enlighten, console, and instruct; the other

resembles a walk of pleasure in the open country: we seek and desire nothing determinate,—we are interested in the work,—we wish to see how a poetical invention is unfolded,—or we desire to follow the course of an argument. Instruction, consolation, amusement, come in greater measure, but they are not sought; we are not transformed from a narrow frame of mind by a book, but the book has freely and uncalled-for caused a correspondence in our mind with itself. The judgment is in this way less shackled, and as it is independent of momentary impulse, more to be depended upon. An author must prefer to be so read and proved. Herder may calmly wait for criticism. His mind is one of the most beautifully-spiritual phenomena that has been produced in our time. His short lyrical pieces are full of deep meaning, and in the delicacy of the language and the charm of the imagery are loveliness itself. He knew how to clothe the spiritual, sometimes in a well-chosen image, sometimes with a judicious word, in a corporeal form, and still to pervade the sentient form with spiritual power. He delighted most in this union or blending of the sentient with the spiritual, whilst he sometimes, but rarely, became playful. One of his strongest characteristics was his delicate and truthful comprehension of the peculiarities of others. This is shown in his National Songs, and in his History of Mankind. I remember, for example, in the latter, his masterly delineation of the Arabians. In compass of mind and imagination, Herder was certainly inferior to Goethe and Schiller; but there was in him a blending of genius and fancy which enabled him to produce what could not be attained by either of the others. This peculiarity induced in him an amiable view of man, his fate and his destiny. As he was very well read, his philosophical ideas were thus made practical, and he obtained a multitude of facts for his allegorical and historical productions. Considered as a whole, his was a marvellously organized nature. He was a philosopher, a poet, and a scholar, but truly great in none of these cha-

racters. This did not arise from accidental causes, but from want of requisite exercise. If he had wished to excel in one of these departments, he would not have succeeded. His nature compelled in him a blending of all—a true blending, in which each, without losing its own characteristics, is in accordance with the others; and as poetical fancy was certainly his predominant taste, so the combination, whilst it awakened the deepest emotions, gave a double attraction to himself. It results from this peculiarity that Herder's reasoning and assertions are not always capable of the most satisfactory proof, so that one can hardly feel assured that he himself was quite convinced of their truth. Eloquence and imagination invest all things with an arbitrary and unanswerable appearance. He derived little from the outer world. His residence in Italy produced none of the rich fruits that Goethe's residence there did. Herder's sermons were remarkably attractive. They were always considered too short by the hearers, who would willingly have listened double the time. Those which I heard, however, did not appear to me to come home to the heart.

If he knew now how much I have written about him in these little illegible letters, he would be surprised;—and indeed I wonder at it myself. I do it only because I think it gives you pleasure. But tell me when you are no longer able to read my letters. I never write to please myself.—With heartfelt sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER XLIX.

TEGEL, Nov. 4 to 8, 1833.

I thank you very much, dear Charlotte, for your letter of the 24th of last month, which would have given me still more pleasure had it not told me of the melancholy feelings under which you are suffering. You say that you can see no cause to which to attribute them. I can understand this perfectly well. As in external nature, so in our inner selves, it is sometimes serene, sometimes cloudy, without our being able to explain why it has so happened. There is in our souls a double sphere:—one, where not merely all ideas, but all feelings, in clear, perfect consciousness of their connection, proceed from one another and flow into one another; and the other, in which a darkness reigns from which only an individual occasionally emerges. This latter feeling we cannot extinguish or lull to sleep. Neither can we blame it;—for the truest thoughts, the soundest determinations, the deepest feelings, often arise from it like sudden revelations. On the other hand, there is much in it wholly corporeal, and belonging to what we must get rid of, and should willingly do so if we could get rid of it alone. It is of this kind of feeling that I believe you complain. Little can be done against such a mood in minds even of the greatest acquired strength. We can indeed so far prevail against it as to think and work as if it did not exist; but we remain sad,—cheerfulness cannot be forced, and man has not much more power against the clouds which overhang the heaven of his mind than he has against the clouds of external nature. In the meantime we must not remain quite inactive, but must labour on at our every-day duties, and be watchful over ourselves.

There is little to be done in that sphere where the consciousness is darkened. The other, accessible to clear ideas, and in connection with them, to recognised feelings, must and can in such moments of sadness be put into increased activity. This never fails to produce its end. A calm and peaceful collecting of the powers of the mind, with which we can meet our fate, always does good, and calls down upon us a higher invisible assistance, which appears only in that measure with which man himself strives to attain the desired end.

* * * *

The winter is showing itself, rather in roughness than in cold. I am well pleased with it. I always live much alone, —in winter still more so;—and this clinging to solitude, arising from a life absorbed by my own thoughts and recollections, increases upon me every year. And it not only increases, but sheds a beneficent, truly blissful influence upon my mind.

* * * *

In Spain there is a mountain inhabited by hermits, Montserrat near Barcelona: I know not whether you have heard or read of it. I was there when in Spain, and I have somewhere written a long description of it. These hermits are not priests, but people who have lived to a great old age in the world, and have often been occupied in important and responsible situations. The place is wonderfully beautiful—like an island on the acclivity of the mountain, quite rocky, and entirely clothed with trees and brushwood. Innumerable paths intersect the various ravines and heights. The mountain has one solitary isolated rock that towers above the rest like a forest of trees. This rock, seventy or eighty feet high, has no resemblance to the others, and it presents many remarkable appearances. From the summit of the mountain there is a very extensive prospect, as far as the sea-coast. There are twelve hermitages, some near, some distant from each other. By an almost childish freak, the

communication between them has been rendered difficult. Two were situated in a large fissure in an entirely perpendicular precipice, which formed an extensive excavation. In this precipice the rock caused a natural partition, which divided the dwellings of two of the hermits. There was no door made in this, which might easily have been done, and so these old men—for such I told you lived here—though dwelling side by side, were obliged, when they wished to see each other, to climb a hundred steps, and then to descend as many. Much besides in the life and devotions of these hermits was quite as peculiar, but less interesting. Nevertheless, this inclination, after an active and fully occupied life, to lead a calm existence, free from the things of the world, in the midst of God's works, on a spot distinguished by its beauty, appears to be the result of depth of feeling. This may not have been the case to the full extent with the residents here; but their position and the whole hermit mountain suggested the obvious idea that it might be so. If we recognise it somewhat as a human emotion, so it is a still more agreeable surprise to meet with an appearance in life with which we can connect a symbolical image.

Fare you well.—With earnest sympathy, yours,

H.

I wish most sincerely that this melancholy mood may speedily leave you, and that you will be able to write to me quite cheerfully.

LETTER L.

TEGEL, Nov. 16 to Dec. 7, 1833.

I begin this letter, dear Charlotte, without having received one from you, but I feel certain that one will arrive in a few days.

First, I must revert to a passage in your last letter which I inadvertently omitted to answer, and for which I thank you sincerely. It is what you say respecting the different kinds of books, and what we must expect to find in them. You refer to Goethe. You know I like the free expression of thought in friendly correspondence, when the meaning cannot be misunderstood. You have induced me to read again the beautiful passage in Goethe's "Truth and Poetry" on which you comment. But upon the whole this case agrees with the usual experience, that in the discussion of opposite sentiments one is rarely converted by the other. It has been my plan, and will continue to be so, to consider a book as well as an individual as being an object of itself, and not as bearing any especial relation to myself. I do not enter, therefore, as Goethe says, into a criticism of the book any more than I should into one of the man. But I consider it as a production of the human mind, which, without reference to my thoughts and feelings, expresses its own ideas and modes of feeling, and lays claim to my attention. I have no doubt that many readers apply it more to themselves and receive it less *objectively*,—and if you ask me whether it would be unpleasant to an author to feel that he has imparted calmness or cheerfulness, has refreshed a weary spirit, or encouraged a depressed heart, I answer with perfect assurance that he is certainly satisfied with this, and feels rewarded even if this has not been distinctly

his aim. I only wished to tell you how I read books, not by any means to blame your manner of doing so.

As we are speaking of books, I will mention one to which I have long wished to call your attention, and the contents and arrangement of which have occupied me for some time. It is a collection of sacred songs that has recently appeared. The collection has been made and published by our ambassador at Rome. Bunsen, the editor, is a learned and very religious man. He has collected the songs from all ages, and has given the preference to the oldest, particularly those of Paul Gerhard. He has been governed by very correct feeling in his treatment of the songs. In general they remain unaltered, but in some cases, where they were unintelligible or might give offence, the alteration is slight and scarcely observable, and always retains the spirit of the original composer. If you pay attention to the choice of the songs, you will perceive what has constituted the editor's idea of a sacred song or hymn. It must treat in a manner so truly poetical the pious and edifying subject it refers to, that the poetical flight may aid the devotional feelings in their upward aspiration. Many indifferent hymns, and especially those by recent authors, merely bring forward in rhyme, pious thoughts that would be just as well expressed in prose. Songs of this character can awaken no warmth in the devotional feelings of the reader, as they do not owe their origin to such feelings in the writer. Songs like these are carefully excluded from this collection. As the editor has paid a great deal of attention to church music, he has considered how far some of these hymns are adapted for singing. But what gives the collection its peculiar value is, that the editor has throughout borne in mind the wants of a truly Christian devotional congregation. He has particularly studied the popular taste, and has chosen the most intelligible,—those that appeal to the deepest and most universal wants of the human heart, and inspire the greatest fervour of devotion. By a comparison

of a great number of other books, he has endeavoured to ascertain which hymns have been most popular in Germany, and which have been introduced the most frequently into other collections. I have dwelt so long upon this subject because I felt sure you would be interested in it. You have often told me how much you value the old church service, particularly the hymns sung by the congregation; you have especially instanced Paul Gerhard's songs, and have called them *immortal.* So while I was reading these hymns I was thinking of your taste for sacred poetry. You are right;—there is quite another spirit in the old songs than is to be found in the new ones; they invigorate more by their perfect simplicity, and you will say that Bunsen deserves credit with many who will find pleasure in these hymns. They are followed by a collection of prayers. These, however, have not interested me so much. The difference lies in the nature of things. Prayer is the expression of the devotion of the individual;—but if the individual himself prays, he requires no formula; he pours forth his own self-chosen and connected thoughts before God, and scarcely requires words at all. Real inward devotion knows no prayer but that arising from the depths of its own feelings.

When I compare the period of my childhood and youth with the present, I should say that a more religious spirit prevails now. I speak only of this neighbourhood, as I am not acquainted with the state of other parts of Germany in this respect. This has been in great measure the consequence of the last war. Yet we cannot say,—and this is a more favourable view of the human mind,—that misfortune alone has induced this, though it has certainly given greater earnestness to our devotional feeling. But the tendency to piety arises more from the success of our endeavours, as a sort of thanks for benefits received. It arises partly from the conviction carried to the heart with joyful wonder, that Providence alone can afford us strength and grant us protection.

* * * *

It is asserted on all hands, as a state of things worthy of condemnation, that mankind have now a greater tendency to immorality than in past times. This assertion is questionable, and I am inclined to doubt its truth. It appears to me to be more a perversity of opinion—a distortion of ideas. Formerly there was a more wide-spread spirit of frivolity, and there is no doubt that frivolity undermines all morality, and leaves no deep thoughts nor pure earnest feeling. It may be united to a naturally amiable disposition, but in such a disposition nothing is done from principle, and there is no thought of self-sacrifice and the subduing of selfish considerations. An earnestness prevails now, which leads to reflection, and which in its reaction on the mind renders it capable of a strong exertion of the will, which remains in force even when the determination involves a sacrifice.

* * * *

The weather is mild for the season,—but so much the more melancholy. I am so fortunate as not to be affected by the weather. I enjoy it when it is fine, and I am indifferent about it when it is bad. But I feared that the tone of depression of which you complained lately might be attributable to the influence of this November sky. There are few who can bear to be obliged to deviate from their usual plans by the elements. Some are more affected by them than others. I once knew a lady who wrote many letters, and never forgot to mention what sort of weather it was when she wrote. Immediately after the date came the notice of the weather,—and described pretty fully too. This became so completely her habit, that the letter in great measure took its tone from the prevailing skiey influences, so that her correspondent could judge from the commencement what sort of a letter it would be. A depressed state of mind like this, arising so completely from external causes, is removed naturally without the trouble of seeking for any means of distraction. It is otherwise with a melancholy

produced by the influence of some abiding sorrow, which arises from a painful experience of the sufferings of life. This takes a deeper root, and is more difficult to remove. Such a tone of mind, however, carries within itself innumerable sources by which it can again attain peace and tranquillity. It is built up in calm solitude, from the desire innate in the minds of men to be at one with a Higher Power guided by wisdom, and if there is something in the melancholy arising from no apparent cause to soothe the mind and to divert it from its sorrows, it is the consolation arising from this trust and the continued mental occupation with the thoughts directed to heavenly things in a noble, enlightened spirit.

December 4.

I have now received your letter of November 24, and thank you sincerely for its whole contents. Maintain this calm, cheerful, contented frame of mind. A cheerfulness like that you speak of is a very precious gift of heaven or of fate, and, as you very justly observe, is the fruit of a natural simple disposition, easily satisfied. But even when it arises naturally in this way, it requires an effort to cultivate and cherish it,—I do not mean by external means, but entirely by mental effort. It is so also with melancholy. A man who has lived an inner life, has formed for himself a host of convictions, feelings, hopes, and misgivings. These are his own and cannot be torn away from him. In these he can find his happiness, his peace, his cheerfulness; these are secure to him, even if his frame of mind continue melancholy;—for every object of an exalted melancholy is readily associated with the circle of thoughts and feelings alluded to above. As soon as one can bring anything that engrosses the mind into the dominion of spiritual activity, it becomes milder, and blends itself in a conciliating manner with every peculiarity, so that even if it affects us painfully, we should

be neither able nor willing to separate it from our natures. By spiritual activity I do not mean that of reason. This can bring to a mind of acute feeling only a dull, obstinate resignation, which is more like the repose of the grave than the cheerfulness of which I here speak. But pure spiritual activity has a much more extended influence, and blends with every emotion, even the highest of which man is susceptible, and in this blending consists the true means of obtaining real consoling peace. In it, thought loses its coldness, and emotion is raised to a height in which injurious, partial consideration of self and the present is lost.

Fare you well. I will answer your last letter the next time I write.—With the sincerest sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER LI.

TEGEL, Dec. 20 1833, to Jan. 7, 1834.

In less than a fortnight another year will have closed, and none has even appeared to me to pass away so rapidly, particularly the last four months. It seems as if I had but just returned from Nordernei, and yet as if I must soon go again into the waves of the North Sea. Perhaps it may be different with the six months which I am thankful to say have still to pass before that dreaded time; for though I like the little island well when I am once from home, the disturbance of moving is very much against my inclination. I shall probably be deceived in my hope that the next months will appear to pass slowly. It is a characteristic of old age to find the progress of time accelerated. The less one accomplishes in a given time, the shorter does the retrospect appear.

I rejoice on your account, as well as on that of your friend, that she is about to travel into Italy. I know few greater enjoyments, and no pleasanter reminiscences, than those that are experienced after the return from a journey. The height of enjoyment would be for a man and his wife to take such a journey in all the freshness of youth, when nothing wearies.

You ask me to recommend some book of travels in Italy, in which you may follow your friend in your thoughts. I am really at a loss what to mention to you, dear Charlotte. I should say first that there is not one by Schlegel, which would be indisputably the best. That of George Jacobi's tells little of importance. There are two kinds of books respecting Italy. One is descriptive — a sort of guide through streets, churches, and galleries, only to be read

when one stands before the objects, or to recall them after they have been seen. The perusal of such a book would be very tedious to one who had never been at the places described, and therefore I cannot recommend any of these works to you. The other kind is less a description of the country, than a delineation of the individual life of the author in the place visited. This is obviously the more interesting,—only the traveller may mingle so much of himself, that the reader learns little or nothing of the country. Of this species there is generally an abundance of Travels into Italy, as every one wishes to express his own emotions *there*. But who can read such a number? and how can one be chosen out of the multitude? I recommend to you Stolberg's Travels, and Frederica Brun's last book on Italy. Stolberg, that is Frederick Leopold, was accompanied by George Jacobi. In his book, which belongs rather to the first than the last species of travels, he has made extracts from the old writers, without, however, being so tedious. He will be found more correct than many other writers of travels, especially among the French and English; —but even some Germans display great want of knowledge with superficial reasoning, or the expression of insipid feeling. The only reason why I hesitate in my recommendation, is my doubt whether Stolberg's Travels extend over the whole of Italy, or only a part.

No doubt you know Frederica Brun through her writings. Her maiden-name was Münter. She lives in Copenhagen, and must now be advanced in years. Her book has no great depth, but it is lightly and agreeably written. She resided for a long time in Rome while I was there, and the book of which I speak refers to this residence. But I repeat it, it is very difficult — almost impossible — to write anything concerning Italy which will convey to the reader the emotions of the traveller,—if he is a traveller of the right sort, that is to say. It is not that he experiences anything remarkable and indescribable, but rather that the

enjoyments are so simple that it is difficult to say anything new about them. This arises from the accumulation of impressions, which renders it impossible to give an account of them. Most writers of travels devote their chief attention to the description of buildings and antiquities, and so run the risk of repeating what has been said times innumerable.

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It is very kind of you, dear Charlotte, to say that you would rather go without my letters than expect them from me in the present state of my eyes and hand. I acknowledge this with the more gratitude that I know what my letters are to you, and that you find in them much more than they really contain. I feel also that your loneliness makes them more valuable to you, as it is not easy to bear entire solitude. I can fully believe that the cessation of my letters would cause a decided void in your daily life. I know also how to estimate fully the passage which your last letter contains. At present, however, I see no necessity for making any alteration. If nothing unexpected occurs to me, a complete cessation of my letters is certainly not necessary. The infirmities that make writing difficult are of that sort which increase gradually, at least at present. The consequence will be, that I shall write shorter letters, and it will be a satisfaction to me to think that the reading of them will not be such a long piece of work for you. Have perfect confidence that I will not over-exert my strength. I am naturally, and from early habit, active, and my patience is not easily exhausted. I am not soon conquered by difficulties, and I do not readily give up my purpose. In order to acquire this firmness, I accustomed myself, even from childhood, to do things which required a bodily effort, and have never tried to avoid pain and difficulty from any feeling of effeminacy. I am thankful that such has been my disposition; for if self-renunciation and strength of will do not belong to the highest class of virtues, they may certainly rank amongst the most useful, though they cannot make one

quite independent of the shifting scenes of fortune. Man cannot in this life attain to a state of perfect independence; he must look upon it as a great privilege granted by Providence, that even a certain degree of this feeling of independence which he struggles after is in his own power, and that he alone is in a position to attain it, since it is in his own soul. But if he proceed boldly and fearlessly in the determination to allow no external influences to have power over him, he attains much, and can anticipate most of the difficulties that await him in life. In old age I can say with truth, that I do not seek to make life easy and pleasant, if I may except the single point of my indulgence in solitude; for I have now quite given up visiting, even at the few places I frequented last winter.

January 4, 1834.

This is the first time I have written the new date. I I never thought that I should have written so many,—and even now, when I look upon life as almost ended, I have no presentiment arising either from the state of my bodily health or from any inward misgiving, that I shall not write the dates of many new years. I do not say this merely in order to give you pleasure, willing as I ever am to do so, but because I really feel it. Notwithstanding the extraordinary weather, my health, except my few infirmities, does not give me any cause of complaint.

The interchange of ideas of which you speak in your letter is very beautiful, but the taste for it is past with me. The presence of another disturbs my *solitude*,—that is to say, in the strictest sense, *myself*. It easily annoys me, and may become even tormenting. I avoid as much as possible the visits of even my oldest friends and acquaintances, although I thus run the risk of appearing rude and uncourteous; but there are some sacrifices which it would be wrong to inflict upon one's self. Most of my friends, however, are discreet, and permit me the pleasure of being alone.

I have been much interested with what you say of Paul Gerhard, and I shall reperuse the songs you point out. His adventures were not unknown to me, but I had never thought of them in reference to his compositions, which give the more interest to them.

I now close my letter with hearty good wishes for you in the new year. May it keep you free from harassing events, and maintain you in health and the calm cheerfulness which brings happiness with it!

With the sincerest sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LII.

TEGEL, January 12, 1834.

You refer again in your last letter to Paul Gerhard's Hymns, which you say are such favourites that you know most of them by heart—that you call them immortal, and have often derived consolation from them. I am not surprised to hear this from you; but it pleases me very much, and I quite agree with you that the old hymns are much more vigorous than the newer ones. You may be right also in thinking that but few ambassadors to Rome would occupy themselves with a new edition of a book of hymns. It does Bunsen great honour. I do not remember the passage in which Herder says "that if one had no other book, one might live with a Bible and hymn-book." (Tell me the volume and place.) For the multitude it would certainly be amply sufficient. I am entirely of your opinion respecting the Bible. I should consider the hymn-book merely as an addition. What is to make up for all else must not proceed from an individual author, well known and near ourselves: it must resound in our ears from distant ages as the voice of all mankind, in which even the voice of God himself is revealed. One whose spirit was sufficiently simple and child-like to enter into the feelings of earlier ages, might go into solitude with Homer for his sole companion. Man cannot sufficiently wonder, or be thankful enough to Providence, that from time to time He awakens in the spirits of a whole people or of individuals those truly god-like thoughts on which our inner being reposes.

You remark that you have certainly read good books, but a smaller number than might be supposed; that they are quite of a different character from the modern litera-

ture, and you almost complain that you can read but little, and if now and then your inclination tends to the latter, you always turn again to your old friends. For myself, I assure you that I could very easily live without books. I have not a real taste for reading, and for one occupied during a long life in such varied scientific pursuits, I have read but little. I know the names only of a number of books which were read long ago by others, and I may be surrounded by books, and know that there are new ones amongst them, and yet never open one. This slight power of attraction for me in books—almost as it were a sort of disgust—is not a feeling recently experienced, but existed when I was very young. I lived very much with books day and night, but always with the aim of learning something definite from them—of searching out and investigating. This is different from the desire for reading, almost amounting to a passion, which exists in the minds of some men, arising from a vivacity which I never possessed—from a feeling of the want of the material of thought, which is really connected with a desire to attain this material in great variety from without, instead of gaining it in more uniformity from the mind itself. At the same time this taste is not to be despised. The want of this external vivacity, the dependence upon individual thought, the self-occupation, are not always signs of the genuine ore without dross. For these feelings often arise from apathy—an inclination to idleness, and produce lazy dreaming rather than profitable meditation. There is a sweetness, however, in this state, that I can compare to nothing: one may now lose one's self in ideas, now recal remembrances of the past. The pursuit of a train of ideas when in this state of reverie is easier and less fatiguing than speaking or writing: one only thinks for himself, and can pass over intermediate reasoning and reach the end sooner; it is scarcely, however, so accurately reached when no other is present to urge one on. But where truth rests upon feelings, these are shut up in one's own

bosom. Therefore all religious men are inclined to solitude. Thoughts of the past are clothed in such a sweet, soft twilight, that time, thus lived over again, penetrates deeper into the soul than was permitted by the confusion of the present; for the present is always blended with the future, and the emotions of the future are liable to change. Enjoyment also, like pain, puts the mind into a state of tension not favourable to the calm consideration of the subject. If this pleasure, in the indulgence of certain thoughts that exert a wonted charm over the soul, is opposed to the indefinite enjoyment of glancing over a book, my choice would not remain long undetermined, and I could spend a great part of my time without books.

You remark that we often hear the question—"What is happiness?" If by happiness is meant, whether man is happy or unhappy in his deepest emotions, and not merely in reference to the events of his life, the word is indeed difficult to define. For he may have many and heavy sorrows, and yet not feel unhappy; nay more, he may find in this very sorrow such elevating food for his mind and heart that he would not exchange his feelings for any other. On the contrary, he may be in possession of all that can yield enjoyment—may suffer scarcely any deprivation—and yet, in respect of happiness, feel an intolerable void. A due exercise of the mind and feelings is also necessary for happiness, varying, no doubt, according to the proportion of these in each individual, but so that every felt want may be supplied. The nature of this exercise, or rather of this interest in spiritual things, takes its direction according to the individual aim which each gives to his life, or rather which he finds placed in himself; so happiness or misery lies in the success or failure in the attainment of this aim. I have always found that feminine natures enter more easily into this feeling than those of men, and in this way they form for themselves a calm happiness in a joyless or even a sorrowful position. This view is full of interest respect-

ing a future state of existence. For the attainment of any other state can only be derived from one already fulfilled; —one can only attain that for which one is prepared, and there can be no sudden impulse given to the development of mind and character.

February 4.

I received your letter finished the 24th of January at the usual time, and I thank you sincerely for it. It has given me very great pleasure to observe the peaceful and even cheerful tone in which you have written, and still more to know that you attribute this to my letters. I wrote you the exact truth. As long as I can write to you without injury to my eyes, I will do so, even if my letters are shorter. But I am sure you will be composed and cheerful if I should be obliged to give it up. It is worthy of a human being to take calmly all that happens in the course of Nature. This has ever been with me an object for my efforts, and I may say that I have attained it in no slight degree. But I wish to find the same in others, particularly in reference to myself. Nothing affects me in such an unpleasant and unprofitable way, as to perceive that any one is anxious about me, or loses his self-possession on my account. Peace and composure in every lot—a state either of cheerfulness or melancholy, will make life endurable, and raise the soul above the vicissitudes of time.

Fare you well.—With sincerest sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER LIII.

TEGEL, February 1834.

My feelings respecting February are remarkable. On the one hand, I prefer it to any other month in the year; on the other, it is the most unpleasant. I cannot account for my preference, but my disinclination to it is founded upon its own nature, and has been experienced by me since I was a child. Although it is only a few days shorter than the other months, it makes time appear to pass still more rapidly. I dislike too the irregularity in leap year. You will think this very childish, dear Charlotte, and will wonder at my wasting my time about it. I will do so no longer:—the date reminded me of it.

Speaking of time, it occurs to me that we have never alluded in our correspondence to Halley's great Comet, which will return in the autumn of next year. It is now calculated upon with certainty. It will appear, no doubt; but a question occurs, Will the tail be as long? At the last appearance, a diminution of the length of the tail was remarked, and it seems very possible that these extraordinary bodies lose some of the less dense portions of their substance during their course. For their structure has so little solidity, that with powerful telescopes fixed stars have been clearly discerned not only through the tail, but also through the head of the comet. This event in the heavens appears to be so near also, that every one is disposed to ask himself whether he shall live to see it; and although I should not lament much if it were never seen by me, yet my curiosity has been not a little excited on the subject. The heavenly bodies which appear after a longer or shorter interval give a very sensible idea of the incomprehensible-

ness of the whole creation. We feel intuitively that there must be causes, of whose nature we can have no conception, which guide those immense bodies in their rapid courses through distant space. To none of these questions can a satisfactory answer be given: we can only indulge the hope that our condition after death may enable us to solve them; —and thus our interest in the solution of the problem becomes a spiritual one.

15*th.*—I remember that not long since we mentioned in our letters a lady long since dead, whom Goethe had wished to marry, and to whom he gave the name of Lili in his poems. We could not then recal her name: it was Schönemann. Her husband was Herr von Türkheim. He loved her during her acquaintance with Goethe, and long doubted his own success. This was related to me lately by a friend of both.

Within these few days Berlin has suffered a loss in the death of one distinguished alike in religion and philosophy. Schleiermacher, after a short illnes, died of inflammation of the lungs. He must be known to you as the author of many moral and religious writings. Respecting Schleiermacher it was true, in a remarkable degree, what is the case with most great men, that their speeches surpassed their writings. One who has only read his innumerable published works, and yet has never heard his spoken eloquence, must be unacquainted with the rarest talent and most remarkable characteristic of the man. His strength lay in his power of bringing his words home to the heart both in preaching and in his other clerical duties. It would be wrong to call it elocution, for he was certainly free from all art. His was the convincing, impressive pouring forth of feeling,—not so much enlightened by such a spirit as is rarely met with, as being in perfect unison and sympathy with it. Schleiermacher possessed naturally a child-like, simple, trusting

disposition;—his faith sprang from his heart. But besides this he had a decided tendency to speculation. He united, with equal satisfaction to others and happiness to himself, a philosophical and theological professorship in the University of Berlin, and his Ethics, a strictly philosophical work, is closely connected with his ideas on the subject of divinity. Speculation and belief frequently appear hostile; but it was peculiar to this man to unite them intimately without any prejudice to the freedom and depth of the one, or to the simplicity of the other. He has left the last witness of this in an expression he made use of on the day of his death. He told his wife, a woman of remarkable intellect, that his sense of all external things became dull, but that his ideas remained perfectly clear, and that he especially rejoiced to find his deepest speculations in complete unison with his belief. In this beautiful spirit of harmony he expired.

With sincere sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LIV.

TEGEL, March 14 to April 4, 1834.

I am very glad that Stolberg's Travels in Italy have given you pleasure. I thought myself that his thorough examination of every subject on which others have expressed any doubt, would make the work interesting to you. I always believed that Stolberg's conversion to catholicism was the consequence of his residence in Munster, where there are many very zealous catholics of both sexes, possessing also great intellectual power. It is at the same time very possible that the journey into Italy may have contributed to the change. The splendour and pomp of the churches may well incline an earnest mind to another faith, and undoubtedly in all this there is much that is very delightful, and at some moments exciting, to a disposition easily affected by impressions, quite independently of any belief in the doctrines of catholicism. It has always appeared to me likewise that the prevailing custom in most catholic countries of having the churches open the whole day, must have a powerful influence. The most obscure of the people has here a place where, undisturbed, he may sit alone in the indulgence of his thoughts and feelings, and, though near a home crowded with every earthly misery, find for himself an asylum from all his woe, in which every lofty and noble aspiration is cherished. The careful seclusion of our Protestant churches has, however unwillingly we may admit it, something sad in it, and prevents any general enjoyment of what ornament and decoration they may at present contain. It is only by a special unlocking by the sexton summoned for the purpose that they can be seen. In every country

the mass of the people take a real and hearty interest in these things, and it would be a great mistake to believe that they are indifferent to them.

I have been much interested in what you say of Paul Gerhard's Hymns. I can readily conceive that a mind which had suffered under repeated painful occurrences might derive comfort and consolation from them. I shall read again the hymns you point out to me, and according to your request I will endeavour not to be annoyed at any old-fashioned or even offensive expression, but will look, like you, to the spirit of them, which is always elevating. Perhaps Bunsen has amended that defect. They must ever be poetical. This does not necessarily depend upon the construction—least of all indeed;—it is derived from the aspiration and the depth; and the sense of this is often found more pure in the multitude than amongst the class of cultivated but not thoroughly cultivated persons. It does not appear to me that the authors of the old church-services studied sufficiently the ideas and language of the country people in order to be intelligible to them and to elevate their feelings. What wants taste to us does not appear so to them. This naturally arose from the state of the times, when the true German cultivation of a more refined nature scarcely existed, and the educated classes, in so far as their refinement was not foreign or acquired, were in fact less separated from the people than now. Those old church poets, and particularly Paul Gerhard, in whom the passages which displease us are only slight blemishes, understood far better how to interest the people and at the same time elevate their feelings, without lowering their own ideas, giving up their opinions, or using any unworthy expression. This genuine popularity is an essential requisite of good, appropriate, sacred poetry. For the church is for all: there should be no distinction of rank or of cultivation, yet the really cultivated man should be repelled by nothing painful to him. Both these objects may be

attained without the one prejudicing the other. For everything pure and really human—free from all artificiality and show of erudition in matters of knowledge, and from all over-indulgence and exaggeration in matters of feeling—belongs to the people, and especially to the country people, whom I should trust more than the inhabitants of towns, not merely in respect to their knowledge but their feelings. And this deep genuine human feeling is the groundwork of all real refinement. In this expression of human thought and feeling, all classes of the nation, at least in Germany, sympathize. So they prefer a simple, clear language, like that in Luther's translation of the Bible, which never becomes vulgar, and yet—except the passages in which the obscurity lies in the sense and the things—is equally intelligible to all. The safest way, in hymns for the church, is to follow scriptural expressions closely, and also to present some more difficult succession of ideas to the minds of the people. If a preacher, as is frequently the case, is mentioned with commendation as being instructive and edifying to the cultivated classes, I consider this very partial praise; and if he does not understand how to interest the masses of the people, it is a great reproach. The church is for all, and the truths of religion will naturally be received more agreeably and universally if they are addressed to the understandings of all. The partition wall which divides the educated classes from the more illiterate is already too high: it requires double care to maintain the important ties which yet bind them together.

Farewell, and be ever assured of my unalterable sympathy in whatever concerns you.—Yours, H.

LETTER LV.

TEGEL, April 15 to May 8, 1834.

You have remarked, dear Charlotte, that in my last two letters my handwriting has been larger, clearer, and more distinct, and I see that you have been surprised at the change.* It is a victory which at length by firm determination my will has gained over my hand. In respect to the inconvenience of not being able to write myself, but being compelled to dictate everything, this improvement does not relieve me from that fear, as the new method is rather more tedious than the old one. In the meantime it is a decided gain, as it is much plainer, and gives no trouble in reading, whereas my former writing was illegible to a painful degree. In old age a man returns to the handwriting of a child.

There is an important but doubtful point respecting old age,—at least it is doubtful to my mind,—whether increasing years bring a gradual weakening of the mind or character, or of both, almost unmarked in its progress. A thoughtful man, who reflects a good deal upon himself, must acknowledge that it can scarcely be otherwise. Everything wears out in time, and added to this is the close dependence of the soul upon the body. Sometimes one is surprised at giving a proof of this in one's self. But there is a painful thought, whether this decline is not of much more frequent occurrence than is generally admitted. A man justly distrusts his own judgment on this subject, as his powers of discernment must have suffered in the general

* This sudden change from painful indistinctness to large firm writing, was surprising and very affecting.—*Ed.*

decay, and the truth on such a point can never be learnt from another. It is generally asserted that the memory suffers most. I do not experience this myself, nor should I in the least complain, unless it were a very serious loss. Worse, and at the same time more difficult to detect, is the want of decision,—the difficulty of extricating one's self from a doubt, and pronouncing a decided judgment. This irresolution affects every subject of thought, for all spiritual things in the soul of man are indissolubly united together. The worst thing is the check to the copiousness of ideas. This naturally depends upon the strength, activity, and vigour of all the powers of the mind, and it is natural that the number of added years should exercise a marked influence upon these. Already the dulling of the senses destroys much. All ideas, formerly accumulated, which depend upon perception, lose in clearness and distinctness, and especially in a quick intuition. But what I regret the most is a sort of lulling of the soul, by which it goes on in its long-accustomed track, and deems itself the while in a state of activity. The awakening of the spirit, its richness of conception, which it sometimes derives from reflection on men and things, and sometimes creates from within, or the determined progress in a succession of ideas long since entered upon and perhaps occupying an important portion of the life, is to the human being what truly invests life with a charm and a value, and this not merely to intellectually-organized, highly-cultivated, thoughtful men, but to all. For every one has an inner sphere of ideas and feelings, truths and opinions, fancies and dreams, in which active and awake he will abide, and which he will devise as employment for his mental powers. However little spiritual a man may be, he fears no reproach so much as that of being weak-minded. One is perhaps safe from the complete decline of the powers without a very serious illness; but a slight weakness is annoying enough, and one is the more uneasy, as it may readily remain long unnoticed.

I received your last letter later than usual, and I was grieved to find from it that you were again in a depressed state. You say yourself that time will cure it, but life is too short to be deprived of whole weeks in this way. You were also, to my great joy, for a long time cheerful and happy. Be so again, I conjure you. We may do much if we trust ourselves. Moods of mind no doubt arise, from causes over which man has little control, but they become more and more destructive to peace of mind if they are left to themselves. The surest way is to excite other feelings in opposition, and you know from your own frequent experience that the feelings may be so acted upon by exalted and noble objects, that every dark and gloomy tendency is charmed away.

With the most friendly sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LVI.

TEGEL, May 16, 1834.

I thought, dear Charlotte, that you must be better in this lovely spring weather. The foliage, which at first was unusually late, has burst forth suddenly with the warmth and the refreshing rain, and the mild fragrant air tempts one to remain out till late evening. Writing and reading are easily accomplished out of doors, but I never liked to do so myself. Whenever I have tried it, it appeared to me as if the air drove thought away, and disturbed my work; and I scarcely like even an open window in my study. A walk, on the contrary, encourages the flow of ideas, and renders them more prolific. It is the best preparation for work, and besides that, secures the freest and most undisturbed enjoyment of one's own thoughts, remembrances, and emotions. I prefer walking alone, and do not like any companions to interfere with my solitude in the midst of Nature.

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The words of Paul which you quote in your letter—"If we had hope in this world only, we should be of all men most miserable,"—have certainly a deep truth and an impressive meaning. They express in the shortest and simplest manner the immortal destiny of man; since for every high, noble, and truly worthy feeling of man, we trace an origin that is not of this world. Every improvement of our nature arises from the conviction that our being will continue beyond the confines of the present life. This gives to man the feeling which reflection always suggests,—that the world which surrounds him, in which he labours and enjoys,

is not sufficient for him, and that his hopes and his longings lead him to another, unknown and only anticipated. In the various relations in which each stands to the other, lies the principal difference in the individuality of men. This gives the original direction to the character out of which all else is developed. One entirely involved in earthly affairs, without a thought of a higher world, must in truth be poor. He will be deprived of the best and highest inward satisfaction, and while he remains in this disposition he can attain to no real advancement of his moral being. But there is also a certain scorn of this world and a mistaken devotion to the future life, which, even when it does not lead to the neglect of duty here, prevents the soul from enjoying aright the earthly blessings of Providence. A truly noble disposition avoids both these extremes. It dwells upon the innumerable traces of the Deity scattered throughout the whole creation with such wise arrangement and benevolent care. In this disposition are united the purest emotions of the heart with the human relations, to which without impiety and in a worthy manner we may devote ourselves. Man endeavours to engraft the heavenly upon the earthly, that he may elevate himself to the former in all its purity. In this sense we live in this world for one another,—for the earthly is merely the external clothing of the divine thought. This alone is his own, and not hidden deep within him, but shining brightly and clearly. In this view, the soul is easily separated from and raised above earthly considerations: faith dwells upon immortality and an existence beyond the grave. This faith exists, in a mind that in a just sense does not live for this world alone, not merely as hope or eager desire, but rather as a certainty, closely connected with its own self-consciousness. If we were not endowed with this almost certainty here, we should indeed be sunk in misery;—there would be no compensation for earthly sorrow, and, what would be still more deplorable, the most important problems would remain unsolved, and

our whole being would be deprived of that which impresses the seal upon its perfection.

July 18.

You allude in your last letter to the annoyances attendant upon old age. They are certainly very great, with the exception of a few cases where the powers remain in full vigour till late in life. The most oppressive to me is the check given to activity by the dulling of the faculties. Then there is the helplessness which makes many things difficult and some impossible. If the choice were given, to receive help or to do things slowly and awkwardly, I should choose the latter; for to me the feeling of dependence upon the assistance of others is a very painful one. But whilst I admit all the inconveniences, which may grow to real suffering, and experience a large share of them myself, I cannot complain of old age. It is a part of the destiny of human life to experience such a decline of the powers, and the contemplation of our existence as a whole, when perfectly developed, has something in it soothing, as it presents Man in harmony with Nature. The inward disposition varies so much, that external annoyances are more easily borne. One is more patient, feeling that no complaint respecting the course of Nature is befitting, and the feeling is so much the stronger, that by a calm equanimity of feeling a milder radiance is thrown over all external objects. There is certainly one advantage in old age, that it deprives the things of this world of their material harshness and severity, and places them more in the inner light of thought, whence one surveys them as a great and tranquillizing whole.

July 28.

I received yesterday your letter of the 22d, and I thank you, dear Charlotte, most sincerely, for the warm interest

you take in my health. You will find that I have already given you full intelligence respecting what you prize so much.

Farewell.—With sincerest sympathy, yours,

H.

LETTER LVII.

TEGEL, Aug. and Sept. 1834.

I feared, dear Charlotte, that you would suffer from the great heat, which always affects you. It was, and indeed still is, most extraordinary, and appears like the sultriness preceding thunder. If there was to be a hot season, it is well it should be this rather than next year, for then such remarkable weather would inevitably have been attributed to the expected comet, and in this way the erroneous ideas regarding these heavenly bodies would have gained strength. I can bear the heat very well myself;—the oppressive feeling may be relieved by keeping the room cool, and wearing lighter clothing. But an uninterrupted drought accompanies the heat this year, and it is always melancholy to see the fading of the plants and the shrivelling of the leaves. We have reason to suppose that everything is ordered for the best in this world, as is really the case, and this puts a stop to that short-sighted censure which no man of sense can indulge in.

It is a striking phenomenon in the arrangements of the world, that the whole animated creation, from plants up to man, appear subordinate to the rude wild elements, and dependent upon them. It is as if Nature intended to assert her right over all corporeal and material conditions, before taking into consideration the prosperity and happiness of the sentient being. It is as in household life, where not merely the higher spiritual occupation must often give way to the common every-day work, but where activity in business stands higher in the estimation of men, than a devotion to science or to meditation. In both, the meaning is apparent, that the ground must be prepared through the bodily ex-

ternal conditions, before the spiritual and inward can find a place and disclose its blossoms without danger. This is very intelligible in all things arranged by men, and bearing the trace of incompleteness. Human wisdom and strength do not attain to the principal aim without some sacrifice of the better feelings. Such a mode of interpretation is not permissible in the arrangements of the highest wisdom and power. What is said of such a disregard of spiritual in contrast to the corporeal, if we may so call it, is not satisfactory. There must be something we cannot understand, that lies perhaps in some unknown relation of the spiritual to the corporeal nature. For if we know but little with certainty of the spirit or the soul, the real nature of the body (the material part) is quite unknown and incomprehensible.

I hope you will be better when the temperature is cooler. —With unchangeable sympathy in all that concerns you, yours, H.

26*th*.—I have to-day received your letter of September 18, and can only add this postscript to mine. It grieves me to know, dear Charlotte, that you are not only depressed and out of spirits, but also, as I feared, that you have been ill and have concealed it from me. Be always candid, and do not despise my sincere sympathy, which is ever friendly to you. I earnestly request this.

I must conclude to-day, but I will write soon again. Farewell.—Dismiss sad thoughts.

LETTER LVIII.

TEGEL, Sept. and Oct. 1834.

I am glad on your account, dear Charlotte, of the cooler weather. I hope soon to receive more cheerful intelligence of your health. The cold bath, which I use in the morning, appears formidable to you, but it is not so bad as you think. The shock which the coldness of the water gives for a moment to the nerves is soon overcome, and a pleasant feeling of animation, with an agreeable warmth, is soon diffused over the frame.

The circumstances which have befallen your friends, the St. —— family, are very trying. You had not told me whether the daughter had returned from her Italian tour. Perhaps she shortened it on her mother's account, that she herself might attend upon her.

It has just occurred to me, that on the first of this month I have been accustomed to return from Nordernei. It may appear extraordinary to you, but it is literally true, that this is the first time in my life that I have remained here in Tegel for a whole year, which, with the exception of a few single days and nights, I have done during the past year. When I was a child, my parents always spent the winter in town; subsequently I did so myself. Afterwards came my journeys to the baths. So I have been every year absent for some months; and latterly certainly in the most beautiful season, July and August, when the richness of the foliage and the full power of summer over vegetation reach their highest point. This time I have thoroughly enjoyed it.

October 17.

I am very sorry that an erroneous newspaper report should have caused you unnecessary anxiety. Do not, I pray, consider newspapers as sources of historical truth.

October 29.

Your letter of the 18th of this month has given me great pleasure. I thank you most heartily for it. It is very cheering that you have felt such a sudden change, and that the listlesnesss and depression of body and mind from which you have so long suffered, have left you. I am particularly glad that this improvement has been connected with something in reference to myself.* Continue to maintain this cheerful disposition. You see by this incident how much the emotions of the soul depend upon the corporeal condition;—and we have also great power over the soul through acquired resolution. Think what pleasure you give me, and you will endeavour to do this. Think of me.

Farewell.—Rest assured of my sincere and unchangeable sympathy. H.

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* The alarming reports in regard to the state of his health had suddenly given place to more cheerful ones.—*Ed.*

LETTER LIX.

TEGEL, Nov. to Dec. 3, 1834.

I write to you to-day with double pleasure, because I can perceive from your last letter that you are well and cheerful. You can afford me no greater gratification, dear Charlotte, and in no more agreeable manner make me aware of your feelings, than through the contents and the tone of your letters. The power of doing this depends in great measure upon external influences, but it is the work of the spirit to maintain cheerfulness as far as possible. He who strives to be cheerful, does not do so merely for the sake of of his own happiness; he really exercises a virtue. For serenity, even if there be a tinge of melancholy in it, disposes one to good influences, and gives strength to the spirit to impose more work on one's self, and to do more for others. The maintenance of cheerfulness under unfavourable circumstances also gives evidence of a contented unassuming disposition, that has not its eyes always selfishly upon itself, considering what concerns it to be of greater importance than anything that relates to others. It is moreover a beautiful and pleasing spirit, which lives as far possible in harmony with its destiny, brings to light every joy that remains, and understands how to accumulate and enjoy them. It is evident that here the morally beautiful and noble character conduces the most to happiness, and maintains the mind most securely in quiet and thoughtful activity.

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You ask me respecting Madame de Barnhagen, whose letters under the name of Rachel have been published by

her husband. I knew a good deal of her when she was a very young girl, a few years before I went to the University of Göttingen. Whenever I went to Berlin subsequently, I saw her regularly. When I was in Paris also with my family she was there for many months, and scarcely a day passed in which we did not meet. She was much sought after, not merely on account of her amiable character, but because one could be certain never to see her without hearing something worth bringing away, the material for deep and earnest thought, or some happy lively idea. She was not what would be called a learned woman, although she was very well informed. She was indebted to herself for her spiritual cultivation. We cannot say that intercourse with men of genius contributed to this; for, on the one hand, this intercourse did not occur early in her career, nor until she had formed her own opinions through her observation of life; and on the other hand, her thoughts and even her feelings bore such indisputable marks of originality, that it was impossible to believe that she was indebted to any foreign influence. She associated too with very uninteresting men. This arose from the accident of her external position. But as she possessed great liveliness, and was thrown much into company with the other sex, she avoided this association less carefully than most clever people would have done, and she had a peculiar talent for always discovering the brightest side. Each individual characteristic, as such, possessed an interest for her, as she made it the object of her consideration, and was sure to find out some agreeable attribute. De Barnhagen passed in review every point of daily life, in connection with inward deep meditation. She created her own material for this from the vast variety of actual existences. Truth was especially a distinctive feature in her moral and intellectual being. She allowed no weak self-indulgence to induce her either to shelter herself from eventual blame or to shrink from the pain of a strict self-examination. She gave herself up to no self-deception,

no deceitful hopes, but sought for pure and naked truth, even if it were to herself bitter and unpalatable.

I break off here, as I have just received your welcome letter. But why, dear Charlotte, will you continue to believe the newspapers, and give yourself and—pardon me—me also, so much unnecessary anxiety? I thought you were quite satisfied, and here you are again as uneasy as ever. My bodily state, upon the whole, is just now better, and I do not apprehend any illness, so that I do not think that I shall visit Nordernei or any other spa. You see how false newspaper reports are! I am so fortunate as to know nothing of what people write about me. You will do me a great favour if you will not again allow yourself to be made uncomfortable by such reports. I entreat this most earnestly.

With sincere sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LX.

TEGEL, Dec. 1834 to 2d Jan. 1835.

Here we are at the close of another year, dear Charlotte. I may call it a happy one to me, rapidly as it has seemed to fly, since it has secured to me the pleasure of remaining here, and the hope of doing so for the future, undisturbed by those tiresome journeys for bathing. The trembling of my hand is wonderfully recovered, but whether I may be stronger upon the whole I cannot say. Even this varies from day to day; but its present state is a great relief from the former weakness. I should be wrong to complain of bodily sufferings;—those which I experience are really very bearable, and demand but a moderate degree of patience and resignation. I ought to have much more, and it may be ordained that I shall yet require more. I am never anxious about the future. Man is placed in this world to experience various trials, and to improve them for his soul's well-being. We should enjoy with thankfulness the happiness and freedom from care that fall to our lot, but we should never demand them. You see that I am neither suffering now, nor under apprehension of doing so, and that if any trial befal me, of which I have now no anticipation, I should possess strength of mind to bear it. —I ask you again most earnestly not to yield to feelings of anxiety, equally injurious to yourself and painful to me. This is not merely a matter of inclination with me, still less of caprice. But I entertain the conviction that calm composure is a worthy manner of acquiescing in the decrees of Providence, — nay more, that we are bound by duty to receive them thus. I must admit that we are not always masters of our disposition;—but we can struggle,—and an

object earnestly sought for is half obtained.—You ask me to tell you of some one to whom you can refer when any report makes you uneasy. It is very painful to me to be obliged to refuse you anything, and you must pardon me when I say that I can by no means comply with your request. Scarcely anything would be so objectionable to me as a correspondence respecting my health with any one but myself, whether with or without my knowledge. If I were actually ill, the mere thought would add to my sufferings. If you wish to oblige me, I must request you never again to allude to this wish of yours. You shall never be without tidings of me. Really it would be a very superfluous contrivance. You know that you may freely write to me any day and hour. If you receive a report that disturbs you, ask me about its truth. I will answer directly, though the letter may be necessarily short. If I could not myself write, I would dictate, and I suppose a letter from me, though not in my own hand, would give you more pleasure than one from a stranger.

I must have left the subject of Madame de Barnhagen before I had finished what I had to say. After her death her husband printed a volume of her letters, merely as a gift to friends and relations. This edition is in the possession of those only to whom it was presented, But subsequently Barnhagen prepared an enlarged edition in three volumes, which was generally sold. I doubt if you would be able to obtain this. But I scarcely think you would have the patience to read the three volumes. Very much would please and interest, nay captivate you, but with the whole, so far as I know you, you would hardly agree. In one point you quite sympathize: De Barnhagen really idolized Goethe;—there was no greatness nor beauty she did not find in him. You love and admire him also, although you entertain some prejudices against him, which in my opinion you carry too far. It makes a difference, however, that she knew Goethe personally, so that she would not find

an impartial judgment very easy. It is a question with me whether you would be satisfied with the kind of religious sentiment that pervades her letters: I rather think not.—De Barnhagen writes very much of herself, and has certainly a sharp and dogmatical manner when speaking of others. This we may with justice blame in her, although those who wish that the peculiar characteristics of every one should be openly discussed, would enjoy the book on this account. But she rather relates facts, compares thoughts, and expresses emotions, than pronounces sentence upon the actions and characters of others. When she does this, I can agree with her still less than in her other opinions. She was originally a Jewess, and was converted to Christianity shortly before her marriage. Her husband, who was much younger than she, was at the time of his marriage ambassador at Carlsruhe from our Court, and lived afterwards at Berlin, where he still resides. He is entirely occupied in literary pursuits, and will be remembered amongst the most distinguished authors of the day. But he is very delicate, and I now scarcely ever see him.

You say that some one did you the honour, as you call it, to compare you to Rachel, but that you lay no claim to the honour, and cannot find the slightest resemblance. I am of the same opinion, and I am convinced that it is merely an unfounded imagination. Two persons may have in common with each other general characteristics, as honesty, truthfulness, love of meditation, &c.; but each of these qualities may exist in different degrees, and in point of fact there may be really no resemblance. This was remarkably the case with De Barnhagen. For though some might admire her, and others, on the contrary, blame her, all must agree in thinking her thoroughly original. She certainly resembled herself alone, and I do not think any one could be mentioned who was really like her. This is no eulogium;—it is only the expression of a simple truth; you will find it so if you read her letters. A great number

of persons are mentioned in them, some with the full names, and others with only the initials. The interest is naturally very much increased by an acquaintance with these persons, but it does not, properly speaking, depend upon this, as general remarks, reasonings, and expressions of feeling are united to the personal observations. She is certainly liable to one reproach, that of conferring more praise on some persons, than on others who could more justly lay claim to it. But this can scarcely be called flattery, since they were people from whom she had received nothing and could expect nothing. However erroneous in such cases her judgment and opinions were, the mistake, striking as it was to others, was to her evident truth: the individuals appeared to her such as she represented them.

December 29.

As I do not wish to delay my letter, I can merely thank you for yours: I must postpone answering it to another time. You know I like letters suggestive of reflection,—and this is one of that kind. Your friend Theresa has undertaken a really formidable journey, but if she has the happiness of seeing her mother safe, it will afford her joy for the present, and agreeable recollections in the time to come.

You mention the storm on St. Sylvester's eve last year, from which you prognosticated evil. I have little faith in such signs; but I wish, for the general tranquillity, that this year the night may be calmer. You have certainly experienced during the year that is just closing, much sorrow, disappointment and trouble. May a good Providence richly recompense you during the coming year, with health, peace, and cheerfulness! You may calculate with certainty upon the continuance of my sentiments towards you.—Yours,

H.

* * * *

I have been much interested, dear Charlotte, in what you say in your last letter respecting self-knowledge and self-deception. But I do not think that I am quite of your opinion. I consider self-knowledge difficult of attainment, and but seldom thoroughly acquired, whilst self-deception is easy and of frequent occurrence. Some may succeed in gaining the object; so I will not dispute the point with you, when you think you judge yourself correctly. I could not assert the same of myself with equal confidence. At first sight it appears more easy to know one's self than others, for a man knows his own *feelings*, whilst he can only perceive the *actions* of others, of which he cannot know the real motive; so that from this different manner of proceeding, he becomes liable to a double error. But the judge should remain separate from the one on whom judgment is passed, and ought, under all circumstances, to maintain a strict impartiality and a calm self-possession. He will not necessarily be bribed by the subject of his judgment, or be made distrustful of him. In self-examination we are exposed to all these dangers. We are as much inclined to attribute to ourselves faults, or to exaggerate them, as the contrary. We judge ourselves unequally too at different times. The oft-repeated error does not always arise from want of the love of truth, or from self-conceit; for with the purest intentions and the most upright design, error creeps into every purpose and feeling. The case does not appear to me so simple that, as you say, false judgment is only to be apprehended through vanity. Vanity itself is of such a manifold nature, that perhaps there is no one who would venture to call himself free from it. He may be free in respect to this or that thing, but not in regard to all. Single actions and their motives may be sooner appreciated. The more the judgment of ourselves depends upon a succession of actions and the whole character, so much the less certain will it be. Hence autobiographies are only really instructive when they contain a great number of facts

on which to form the judgment. Self-reflection may easily be led astray.

In your letter sent on the 24th of January I have had the pleasure of reading again something written in a really cheerful mood. You know that I rejoice from my sincere sympathy with you; but I like better to see the temperament that always receives joyful events with cheerfulness and distressing ones with calmness and self-possession. At any rate this is in every case more productive of happiness to the individual.

May the months that follow this flow peacefully for you, and may no painful events disturb your present happy frame of mind! Maintain your cheerfulness! Fare you well.—With unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

[Sent February 2, 1835.]

LETTER LXI.

TEGEL, February 1835.

I finished my last letter with congratulations upon your cheerful mood, and I begin this with the same subject. As the year has begun so well, may it also close happily! Much is gained by a good omen, and superstition itself is useful if it strengthen confidence; for with the exception of real misfortunes, and of events of great importance, most things take their complexion from the state of the mind and feeling. A spirit which generally maintains cheerfulness is always beautiful to contemplate, because it is ever contented and unassuming. I do not of course speak of the contentment arising from thoughtlessness and levity. Levity sometimes assumes the aspect of cheerfulness; but this beautiful word shall be used by us only in its noblest sense. True cheerfulness arises from the calm and peaceful enlightenment of the spirit and the thoughts, or the consciousness of a joyful emotion really worthy of a human being. Cheerfulness can hardly be commanded in a moral point of view, and yet it is the crown of all morality; for the performance of duty is not the extreme point of morality, but rather only its indispensable groundwork. The highest character is that which, whilst morally correct, is built up in reverence for everything holy, in noble opposition to all that is impure and unbecoming, and in deep and sincere love for the good and true. In such a character cheerfulness predominates, and even when oppressed for a time by real sorrow, still remains, though under a different aspect and combined with melancholy. So it is equally a blessing and a source of improvement. No one knows better than I that the happy aspect of men and things around us contributes to

the cheerful tone of our own minds. I quite approve of the plan you pursue for this end, and wish most sincerely that it may succeed; and I must ask you to report its progress to me in some detail.

* * * *

It appears as if we might look upon the winter as already ended. Such mild winters as the present one have fewer charms for the eye, and do not secure the enjoyments proper to winter; but they are, which is more important, better suited to human infirmities. The cold that almost engenders torpidity has certainly something formidable to the imagination, and even to the feelings, not to mention the distress which a severe winter produces amongst the poorer classes, and which cannot be entirely removed by the assistance of the rich, as even in opulent families the difference between a mild and a severe winter is sometimes very sensibly felt.

February 27.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 18th, for which I thank you very much. I am rejoiced that you continue well and happy. Farewell to-day! When my next letter goes, the first leaves of spring will have begun to burst forth.—With unchangeable sympathy, yours, H.

LETTER LXII.

TEGEL, March 1835.

I always hear through you, dear Charlotte, what is said of me in the papers. This time it was only truth as far as my health is concerned. Up to this time the extraordinary winter has not affected me in the least, although it is considered unhealthy.

How people do mention me in the papers without the slightest occasion! It really appears like private tittle-tattle about public affairs, for one can hardly have the simplicity to suppose that it arises from real interest. It is the mania for any and every kind of news. I remember that my first impulse was to be offended by such public allusions. Whilst I was at Göttingen, a lady wrote to me, with whom I kept up a correspondence: now I write often to her, but a time will come when she will read of me only in the newspapers. It occurred to me even at that time as something strange and incredible that my name should be mentioned in the papers. Then private relations were not meddled with so generally: public events attracted more interest.

If you have read only four volumes of Goethe's Posthumous Works, you have eleven still to read. Fifteen new volumes have appeared since his death, which completes the full edition of forty. But I recommend you to read the continuation of his Life: it is charming and interesting in itself, and contains, besides, the history of the time when Ewald was often with him at Offenbach; so that this period will possess a double interest for you, since you have often heard Ewald speak of that period, and your remembrance of every conversation will blend with Goethe's descriptions.

As he entitles the account of his life "Truth and Poetry," he may possibly have allowed himself great licence. I do not think that the posthumous writings contain much that would be of use or of interest to you. I cannot recommend to you those treating on Optics and Natural History: you will not derive either present pleasure or future advantage from their perusal.

You will perhaps have seen mentioned in the papers a book entitled "Goethe's Correspondence with a Child." If it should fall into your hands I recommend you to read it. You will find much amusement in it, and you will not fail to perceive that the authoress is distinguished by wit and talent. She is the widow of the poet Achim von Arnim, and granddaughter of the authoress Madame de Laroche; her mother was the De Brentano mentioned so frequently in Goethe's Life, who left several children. Madame Arnim's husband possessed property in the neighbourhood of Berlin, and she still lives there. In early youth she was much at Frankfort on the Maine with Goethe's mother, who appears to have been very fond of her. Thence arose her intercourse with Goethe himself, which was at first only by letters, but afterwards became personal. She has printed only two volumes of correspondence, partly with Goethe and partly with his mother, and one volume of a diary. The principal theme is her passionate attachment to Goethe. Besides this, they contain relations of her own and of others' experiences, reflections, and reasonings. These volumes contain but thirty letters of Goethe's, of which some occupy only a few lines. They give full evidence of Bettina's really rare mind and of her remarkable originality. The correspondence was carried on in the years 1807–8, when the authoress was not a child, but still quite young though grown up. Altogether the book has made a noise, and found many to approve, although the really beautiful and ingenious passages are mixed with others which from their extreme vivacity of expression may offend. It is to be regretted that with such

real originality so many traits of a whimsical nature should exist. The book contains some interesting details respecting Goethe's mother. She does not appear to have been remarkable for genius; but her liveliness, her desire for society and even for pleasure, and especially a certain tone of originality, may have had their influence upon her son. Madame Arnim's book gives some very lively letters of hers. One part of the work is highly interesting, from the depth of feeling it displays, and that is an account of the death of a Mad^lle de Günderrode, of whom you must have heard. She committed suicide, an unhappy passion having led her to this fatal act.

March 28.

(*Eleven days before William von Humboldt's death.*)

I received on the 23d your letter of the 18th, dear Charlotte, but I have not yet read the whole of it, as my eyes are not to be trusted, and other occupations have intervened. With unchangeable and sincere sympathy, yours, H.

(*Received April* 4, 1835.)

The 8th of April came, and brought me the intelligence, in an unknown hand, dated the 4th of April, of "an illness now passing away," worded so as to spare my feelings as much as possible. The day that I received this intelligence in the unknown hand, was the day of the death of WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT.

A. DE H.

REMARKS AND ADDITIONS.

Letter III.—(Vol. I., p. 31.)

Between the years 1814 and 1820 those public events occurred which are now matters of history, and William von Humboldt's life and labours were then devoted to the State. At this time I could not expect long letters, but I was continually receiving tokens of remembrance and intelligence respecting my property and my own affairs; indeed I found the most affecting proofs of friendly sympathy in the public prints.

Although I received few letters and those short ones, I ought not to have refrained from writing long letters myself. Yet at first I wrote seldom; for how could I summon courage to trouble with my scribbling a statesman burdened with the most important business, the arrangement of which was of the greatest consequence? This may account for my long silence.

The retirement of William von Humboldt from the ministry in 1819 was a public event, much spoken of and well known to me. Silent and still trusting, I waited to see what turn affairs would take for me. At length two short letters, the third and fourth, appeared immediately after each other. They brought joy and life into my existence. The correspondence was then fixed, settled, and determined; —it now suffered no break nor interruption, and through it an inexhaustible source of exalted joy and spiritual elevation was opened to me.

Letter VII.—(Vol. I., p. 38.)

The request contained in this letter alarmed me upon more than one account, although I wished to comply with it. My reply was as follows (according to a copy which I retained):—"The wish which you express in your last letter to me, my highly honoured friend, is a new proof of your very kind sympathy, which I feel and acknowledge most thankfully, and I have a deep sense of the obligation under which I lie to comply with your request. But at the same time I confess that I am somewhat alarmed when I consider the difficulties and perplexities that oppose me. In the first place, permit me to make this objection: How shall I find courage to present my life with its occurrences, which, however important they may be to me, must appear very insignificant in your eyes, accustomed as you are to contemplate the world, life, events, and men, on a large scale. Besides, time has dimmed my memory of many things;—others are yet more deeply sunk in the obscurity of the past, and this will render such an attempt very difficult. I acknowledge thankfully the friendly and flattering commendation of my writing, but I see at the same time that it ought to encourage me. I answer immediately, as you requested me, in order to give you honestly my first impression of your request. Assure yourself, dearest and best friend, that I will consider of it in every point of view. Shall I be able to conquer my native timidity, which makes me shrink back ashamed? I wish and hope to be able to do so, as my life, in its most intricate situations and relations, as well as the working of my soul, might be known, perceived, and understood by you, by the relation of the simplest truth. Pardon me that I once more, *and only once*, recur to your much too kind commendation of my writing. It is great, infinite kindness, I know, and not a jest, although it may perhaps bear the semblance of

one; for whose pen has a charm like yours? I have never made any pretensions to fine writing; indeed I have rather guarded myself against the attempt, for I think that it is attended with much danger to the character. I wrote a good deal, earlier than most women, partly from obligation and partly from inclination. At first I thought that I ought to express myself in writing exactly as I did in speaking;—this was a necessary expression of my character, which abhors all falsehood and deceit. Then I was careful to avoid exaggeration, which was always repulsive to me. Thus the expression of my feelings remained simple and natural;—the more so that I utterly despise all artificialness and pomposity. As I was obliged, earlier than is generally the case, to be occupied with business matters, this clearness of statement became essentially necessary to me. In this way I perhaps gained more facility in writing than I should have done but for this necessity. I became fond of this sort of occupation for my own improvement, and wrote much for myself. How could I foresee that this habit would pave the way, at a later period, for a nearer communion with the dear object of many years affectionate veneration! In what I here say you will perceive my entire readiness to obey you. But I repeat the request that you will grant me a few days for deliberation. After that I will frankly tell you the result.

"Permit me, however, to object to one point. To use the third person in what I write to you alone would lay me under great restraint. My fortunes as well as my character have had their origin within my mind, and have re-acted upon it. Many thousand women, had they experienced what I have done, would have worked out a far different destiny. This individuality ruling over us, seems to blend with the eternal decrees of fate. We can act only as we do act; much that is done by others, even if we do not blame it, our inner mind condemns as incompatible with our own feelings. Such events can only be spoken of with the deepest confi-

dence, and the plainest, I might almost say the simplest truth. The semblance or outside show is quite indifferent to the fully-tried mature spirit, which cherishes a tearful experience as a sanctuary inclosed in the bosom. But it reposes itself in faith upon All-wise and Eternal love. To a friend of youth, too, long and sincerely loved, it can and will lay itself open, —and to such alone! Why then a strange, artificial, restrictive form? I make this objection because it is natural, and I write for *you alone.* I have often been asked to write an account of my own life, or to authorize another and give him the materials; but I have always rejected the idea. After experiencing unusual fatalities we are enabled to consider them only in their salutary effects, to look upon them with reverence as the appointments of a higher Providence, and even to regard them with thankfulness. At the end of our course, of how little consequence is it what we have suffered! how infinitely important the results to ourselves! If I should be worthy of your sympathy, and participate in your influence so rich in blessing, I should not wish anything to have been different. Nevertheless, it is natural that I should be affected at the reminiscence of a painful past, and on this account I cannot give you a decided answer. You already know from my earlier letters that my experience has not been a common one. Many images have grown faint and indistinct; I could not call them back again, nay I dare not; it would destroy me if I lingered too long on the dark and gloomy passages of my life. You appear to have made these objections yourself, and you know better than I can tell you, that one whose experience has been extensive, and who has known great sorrow, honours it in silence, and has neither the power nor the will to speak of it; whilst he who neither knows nor understands sorrow makes it his perpetual subject. I wait your answer with confidence;—and I have a right to do so, for you certainly will not blame my timid objections, and you will be lenient to my weakness, whilst you are fully aware that it is my wish and will to obey you.

Perhaps I may remit you, sooner than you expect, some sheets as an experiment.

LETTER IX.—(VOL. I., p. 45.)

In my answers to the repeated questions of my friend respecting the books and writing with which I was principally occupied, even in childhood, I could not be so diffuse as I should have been, had time permitted. So I ventured to send first some sheets for inspection which had been addressed to a friend of my own sex, but were not quite completed;—they alluded to these subjects. In these pages were my comments upon Goethe and many of his works. It was a confidential, friendly criticism, which was perfectly unprejudiced, and would never have been expressed had I known or even conjectured in what close intimacy the two men were. Amongst others, I dwelt upon the noble Frederica in Sesenheim, with whose affections Goethe sported so cruelly, amusing himself at the expense of the happiness of her whole life, and—never thought of her again! However beautifully he relates this in his "Truth and Poetry," it will never be read by women without painful sympathy, —the more so, that it is sadly evident afterwards that it was not "Poetry" but "Truth," as the unhappy results of this acquaintance were unsparingly made public. In this little essay, I alluded to my dear, tender-hearted friend (without mentioning his name) as a much greater man than Goethe;—I contrasted his lofty sentiments with Goethe's restless petulance. The ninth letter was an answer to this composition.

LETTERS X. XI. XII., &c.—(VOL. I., p. 50, *et seq.*)

It is well known how sacred William von Humboldt held the remembrances and the genius of youth. This is

expressed in many of his sonnets as well as in his letters. His brother, in the preface to the "Collected Works" of the deceased, calls those deeply-felt poems "the journal in which a noble life, full of emotion, is reflected." The sonnets could not well have been more beautifully and more appropriately designated.

The great kindness, and even pleasure, with which every portion of the narrative of my life was received, was rich reward for the labour and the time it cost me. If it were not an occurrence so rare, and at the same time so characteristic, to perceive a man who on all sides and in every direction led so active and useful a life, following with such lively interest the development of the character of a child in the quiet, simple, country life of the middle classes, I neither could nor should have communicated anything of the sort that is mentioned in pages 94, 108, 145, and the following. At first I was inclined to believe, that a man who, from birth and cultivation, had always moved in the first circles, in literary, artistic, and æsthetic associations and occupations, wished for once to become acquainted, from a simple, true, and natural narrative, with the inner domestic life of a circle so far removed from his own. How grateful was I when I became convinced of the benevolent interest in myself! I could not yet conceive that it arose entirely from sympathy, whilst I was contented to think that not every one would find pleasure in dwelling on such a narrative. So I wrote, in truth, only from obedience, and was richly rewarded for it,—first by the kind reception and high estimation, and yet more by the indubitable conviction that it afforded pure joy to the simple, truly human being. This joy was now infinitely heightened by his benignant sympathy with myself, whose unchangeable sentiments had been truly devoted to him through a long life from early youth. The reader who dwells upon these letters and the notes, will consider in such a point of view the communication of many passages, which blessed the receiver, and displayed yet more clearly the rich soul of the writer.

Letter XVII.—(Vol. I., p. 74.)

Some explanation may be necessary respecting the obscure allusions contained in this letter. I am certainly not in a position to solve the problem,—I can only relate the mysterious event which so much interested William von Humboldt.

It appeared quite indisputable, that there was in connection with my father something mysterious,—yes, even belonging to the invisible world, and never satisfactorily explained although carefully investigated. He was himself perfectly conscious of it. Without being either elated or depressed, he spoke of it; related with seriousness many events in different periods of his life, without firm belief, without fear, but also without a scornful, incredulous rejection. He was accustomed to say—"No one has yet penetrated and recognised the connection between the seen and the unseen worlds."

There were fewer manifestations through the sense of sight than through that of hearing. Loud, even noisy movements were heard in the rooms occupied or occasionally used by him,—often as soon as he had left them—never during his presence. These noises were like those that he himself made in the usual employments of his literary life: rustling of books, manuscripts, and papers, moving of tables, drawing forward of chairs, walking backwards and forwards, sometimes slowly, sometimes more rapidly—everything exactly the same, only louder than was usual with my father; so that my mother and we children in a lower room thought that he was in the house. He was accustomed, when the weather permitted, to go out for an hour before dinner either on foot or on horseback. It was his habit then to lock his study and to put the key in his pocket. At these times the noises were the loudest. Very often when he came to table he was serious, somewhat dull and silent, ate

little or not at all. At another time he would relate, calmly enough, yet often with a clouded brow, that when he took the key and was going to unlock the door, it appeared as if the invisible sharer of the room would jump up with a noise as if surprised, and throwing about the chairs hasten into the adjoining room, which was however always bolted on both sides. Very often it appeared as if he could not help believing that some one was in his study and moving his papers about. But he went in, found all unchanged, just as he had left them, books, papers, pens, &c. all in their wonted places, and the chair at the table at which he was accustomed to write, undisturbed. My mother, who was in the habit of attending to many household occupations in an adjoining room in the same passage on the same floor, said sometimes to her children—"God forgive me,—I believe your father is double!" What very much lessened the fearfulness of this was that the nights and afternoons were quiet. In the mornings, and particularly about noon, these noises occurred for more than a year; they were perceived also by visitors. It was really disheartening that not merely all investigations were unsatisfactory, but that no deeper meaning was ever discovered in them. They were neither omens nor warnings—neither elevating nor consoling; everything appeared like the sport of evil spirits, who wished only to excite fear and horror. Here, however, habit exercised her right: we at last became accustomed to these secret invisible agencies, and as they never did us any harm, we soon almost forgot them. Whatever inquiries and investigations were undertaken, no satisfactory explanation could be attained. All these haunting noises ceased at my mother's death, which occurred soon after, so that they might have been auguries of that event.

LETTER XX.—(VOL. I., p. 88.)

The remark of mine, which gave rise to the answer—"It is perfectly true that my lot in life is a very happy one," &c.,—was certainly made by me only with joy and thankfulness, although it was not till afterwards that I became acquainted with all the circumstances of his private life. Where could be found such a union of the elements of true happiness? First the rich, manifold gifts of the spirit, the universal recognition of their influence and effect; then family connections such as rarely exist; the agreeable proximity of two brothers, who had been separated for many years, who enjoyed equal privileges in every way; completely blessed in a wife and companion for life, who shared all his wishes, and who could follow and enter into all his lofty ideas; all external circumstances in harmony; the intimate communion with Schiller; undisturbed, strong health for a long period; and, amongst all the other favours of fortune, that which belongs not to the last or least portion of life—the privilege of living according to his inclination at beautiful Tegel, in his favourite study—certainly a rare, delightful spectacle!

LETTER XXII.—(VOL. I., p. 96.)

The reference made to dreams partaking of the nature of animal magnetism, may here require some words (if not explanatory yet making the point somewhat clearer), respecting a strange or at any rate a rare physiological tendency of mind, as such a one has become known to me from repeated, never-varying accounts, without, however, my having received or being able to give any explanation.

My father had a violent and lingering illness when I was

very young. Contrary to the expectations of the physicians, he was saved by a severe operation, which was performed by a very skilful surgeon who had been called in. After the subsequent complete cure of my father, this surgeon was loved and honoured by all of us as a valued benefactor, and both the families became very intimate,—the more so that the different members, young and old, were about the same age. Next spring, our first visit to the neighbouring town was to Dr. M.'s. This little merry excursion was a real holiday for all of us. At the stopping of the carriage, in descending from it at the entrance into the hall, my father became grave and perplexed—still more so upon entering the sitting-room. Dr. M.'s house was old, and full of angles in which it was difficult to find one's way, and a concealed passage led into a small garden, called by the children the labyrinth. After the first reception, the visitors were shown to their rooms. Then the guest took his host by the arm, with the words, "Now *I* will lead *you*." In silence he brought him first to the dining-room, then through every corner of the house, describing each room and chamber before entering it; and last of all he recognised the concealed passage to the garden. He knew every piece of furniture in this house almost more correctly than those in his own, and gave to the astonished company the following explanation:—that during his severe illness of three months, every fevered slumber brought him to this house; he had been so often and staid so long in every one of these rooms, that he knew them all perfectly. But as he had never previously beheld the scene of his dreams, there could be no remembrance of it to arise again in the sick fancy; so he had considered them as entirely fanciful, diseased visions, without thinking any more on the subject. One may imagine his astonishment at the stopping of the carriage and the first sight of the house, increasing more and more as his visions became realized!

He was wont to dwell upon this extraordinary phenomenon of his inward powers of vision, and related this experience with such uniform exactitude, that I am able to repeat it with equal faithfulness. These wonderful events, which had such strong interest for William von Humboldt, and which he attributed to animal magnetism, never received any further explanation. Who could wish for himself such an inward power? Zschokke, in his review of himself, mentions a similar instance of power of vision, yet at the same time very different, as it concerned the adventures and even the secrets of others.

An answer to the conclusion of the last letter is not amongst my papers; but some fragments which can belong to it alone, may, as they are characteristic, find here a separate place:—

"Where can I find words to express the total impression which the conclusion of your very kind letter has made upon me? Astonishment, wonder, shame and joy, and even a species of fear, but above all, deeply-felt gratitude to you for your constant benevolent care and sympathy, and for your estimation of me, so much outweighing my unimportant worth, which is so deeply moving to me. What a rich recompense for much bitter sorrow!"

"If there is light in my soul, it has been kindled by you, and thus become my own. If I now gave up what enriches, quickens, animates, and blesses me, how poor, how dead, how lifeless I should become!"

"Shall we—ought we—women to give out the treasure of our inner selves, the greater or less abundance of our souls? shall it not rather animate and warm ourselves alone?"

"To you, yes to you, my highly honoured, adored friend! might my whole mind be displayed, and *to you alone*, that by you it may be understood, comforted, instructed, advised, and directed aright. The unlimited confidence with which I always can and do speak to you without any fear, often surprises myself, and appears wonderful, considering the awe with which I am ever filled. What have you done to infuse this feeling into me?"

"I never could resolve upon thus putting myself forward: there is a boldness in it which is quite denied to me. How thankful I feel, how honourable it would be for me to stand publicly under your protection (oh! I have long wished it, and yet have remained silent); but certainly this diffident timidity is innate, and fortune has only increased it. At the same time, it may be that what unfolds itself before the sunny ray of happiness can bear observation however bold, whilst that which is opened in the concealment of the dark shade is frightened, as it were, and fades away."

"It appears to me in general as if women required the protecting shade of concealment. For when we leave it, there are unnumbered sharp darts directed against us, which do not fail of their aim. No, never should I find the courage to do so, though I am penetrated with gratitude for your goodness. No comparison can be drawn between Theresa Huber and myself. She was a daughter of Heyne, and the wife of both Forster and Huber: unusual powers were combined in her with the richest fancy; but what have I?"

"But as we have arrived at this point I am willing to confess to you—although, upon the whole, a sacred as well as delicate feeling rather enjoins silence towards you—that

I should acknowledge it as a high favour of Heaven, if in my later years—should this hard lot await me—I could be again released from the necessity of labour. Yet this would need to be brought about in such a way as would accord with my whole character, for, as you very kindly remark, that which might be acceptable to others would not be in all respects suitable for me. On this account I shall always lament that the Duke of Brunswick, who was so kindly disposed towards me, fell so early at Waterloo: had he lived longer, my losses would have been compensated through his justice, and by that means an old age without anxious care secured to me!"

"But I must not and will not remonstrate against the dispensations of Providence. It was necessary that everything should happen as it did, and that nothing should be omitted that I might atttain that which fate—or let me speak in my own way, which Providence—had prepared for me: communion with you, my beloved, my adored friend, and participation in your friendship, and your influence upon my character in all its developments."

"In fact I am still in the enjoyment of noble and rich blessings, of which many wealthy women stand in need,—blessings retained in the midst of his impoverishment by one who has lost his former prosperity, and unknown to him who has grown up in poverty, because he is accustomed to see in riches the only secure and inexhaustible source of happiness. I have chosen a fatiguing occupation, but it is allied both to art and nature. I gain independence by effort and industry amid free nature and in unnoticed solitude, and this answers all my desires. I have secured and still retain an apartment for my leisure hours, and thither I fly when my daily returning labour oppresses me too

heavily. The more important portion of my occupation claims all my thoughts, cares, and arrangements; but the mechanical part of it, which, though less, is happily not awanting, leaves the spirit free, and then, left to myself, I recall in the depths of my soul the thoughts contained in your last letter, and acknowledge with the warmest gratitude how they aim at bestowing the valuable gifts of consolation and sympathy, raising me above life and its concerns, and conducting me to the height from which you yourself contemplate both."

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